

# Huskers Illustrated

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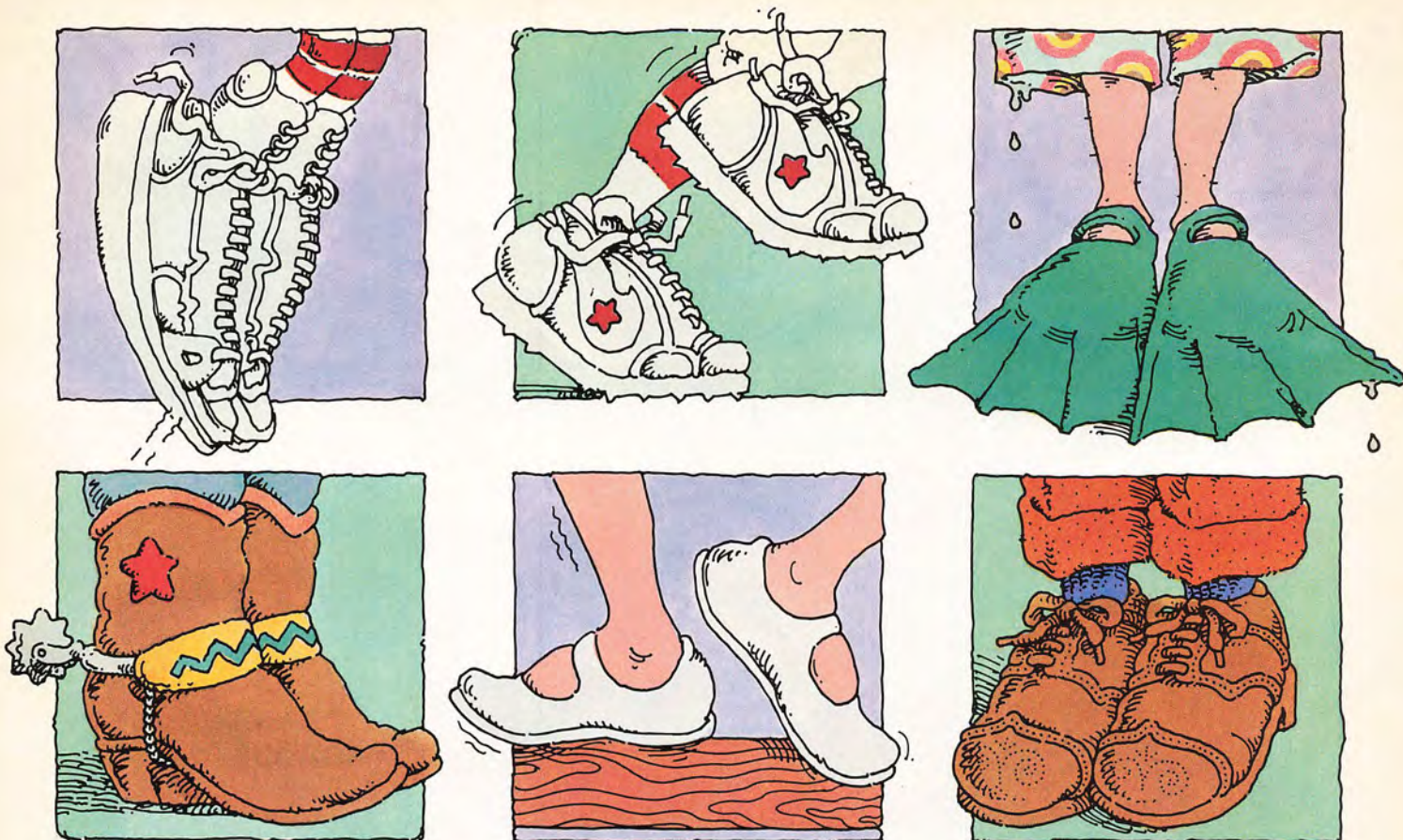
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# CONTENTS

February 1989 ■ Volume 9, Number 2

- 10 **EMPTY HOURGLASS** By Mike Babcock  
Broderick Thomas' time at Nebraska trickles away after a memorable career.
- 30 **JUCO JUNGLE** By Ken Hambleton  
The junior college ranks have been good to Nebraska football recruiting.
- 38 **THE SURVIVOR** By Chuck Pool  
Dave Hoppen overcame knee surgery to earn an NBA starting job.
- 41 **BOMBS AWAY** By Paul Hammel  
Renowned for running, Nebraska's best teams had the best receivers.
- 44 **VOTES OF CONFIDENCE** By Mike Babcock  
Usually low-key, NU faces a publicity crossroads for its All-Stars in 1989.

6 LETTERS	24 STATISTICS
14 HUSKER HOOPS / Mike Babcock	26 STATE OF THE HUSKERS / Mark Owens
17 REVIEWING MIAMI / Mark Owens	29 CONFIDENTIALLY
22 NOTES AND QUOTES	34 RECRUITING BY REGIONS / Pat Quinn

On the cover: Steve Taylor was a marked man in the Orange Bowl. Photo by John Bills.

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## BOOK WORM

Dear Huskers:

Can you tell me what books have been written about Nebraska football and where I can get copies?

I really like your magazine.

Bob Varner

San Antonio, Tex.

Bob: Here are some of the better known books about Cornhusker football.

*Devaney*, by Bob Devaney and Friends; *Nebraska Football: The Coaches, The Players, The Experience*, by James E. Sherwood; *More Than Winning*, by Tom Osborne with John E. Roberts; *Go Big Red: The Story of Cornhusker Football*, by Hollis J. Limprecht, James Denney and Howard S. Silber; *Bob Devaney: Portrait of a Winner*, by Hollis J. Limprecht, James Denney and Howard S. Silber; *The Cornhuskers: Nebraska*

*Football*, by David Israel.

## FORMER HUSKER

Dear Huskers:

I saw USC play on television against Oklahoma and there was a defensive back for USC named Chris Hale. Didn't there used to be a player by that name at Nebraska? Is he the same guy?

*Huskers Illustrated* is doing a great job. Keep it up.

Max Selzer

McCook, Neb.

Max: You're very observant. Yes, Southern Cal's Chris Hale is a former Cornhusker walkon. He was a teammate of Willie Griffin at Monrovia, Calif., High School. After he left Nebraska, Hale enrolled in a junior college, then transferred to USC.

## WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Dear Huskers:

My friend says Nebraska used to be called the Bug Eaters. Is that true?

My favorite players are Broderick Thomas and Charles Fryar.

I like to read the stories in your magazine and I would like to play for the Cornhuskers some day.

Dean Dickson

Chadron, Neb.

Dean: Unfortunately, your friend was right. In the early years, the University of Nebraska football teams were known by several nicknames, among them the Bug Eaters, the Old Gold Knights, the Antelopes and the Rattlesnake Boys.

Cy Sherman, sports editor at the *Lincoln Star* newspaper, is credited with suggesting "Cornhuskers" as an appropriate nickname for Nebraska's football team, after the 1900 season.

## NOT FORGOTTEN

Dear Huskers:

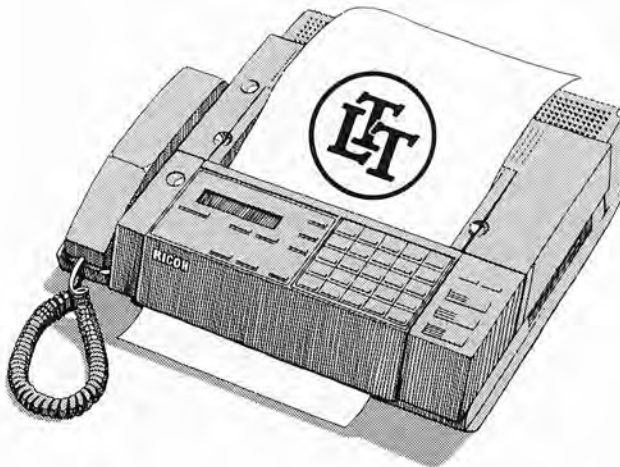
I was sorry to hear that Terry Rodgers got injured and won't be able to play for the rest of this season. He is an exciting player and I hope he can play next season. Do you think he will?

Kevin Jorgensen

Waterloo, Iowa

Kevin: According to Coach Tom Osborne, Rodgers has a very good chance

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of being able to play next fall. However, it appears he won't be able to go through practice in the spring.

#### GREAT GIFTS

Dear Huskers:

I have each of the commemorative plaques you sell. They are great. I hope you will continue to sell them for each Husker season.

Also, I would like to know if there's any way I can purchase a picture that has appeared in your magazine. Thanks.  
Brad Mosher  
Omaha, Neb.

Brad: Thank you for the kind words. Write us and let us know exactly what photograph you mean.

Dear Huskers:

My dad really likes your magazine, which I gave him for his birthday. I like the stories about the players the best. I cut out the pictures and put them on my wall. Sometimes my dad gets mad about that because he likes to save the magazines. My mom says it's okay to cut out the pictures, though.

I think you have a neat job. It would be fun to talk to the players.

I saw Broderick Thomas one day. I was shopping with my mom. Well, that's all. I have to go now.

Mike Rice

Melbourne, Fla.

#### DEFENDING THE DEFENSE

Dear Huskers:

Tell people to quit complaining about Nebraska's defense. Statistically, they've been one of the best defenses in the Big Eight all season. Charlie McBride and the other defensive coaches have done a great job this season. It's difficult to replace players like Neil Smith, Tim Rother and Lee Jones. Plus, look at all the injuries they've had. The Black Shirts deserve the support of the fans, like Coach McBride says.

Tim Paulson

Grand Island, Neb.

*We want to hear your comments and answer your questions. Please address them to "Letters," P.O. Box 83222, Lincoln, NE 68501. ■*



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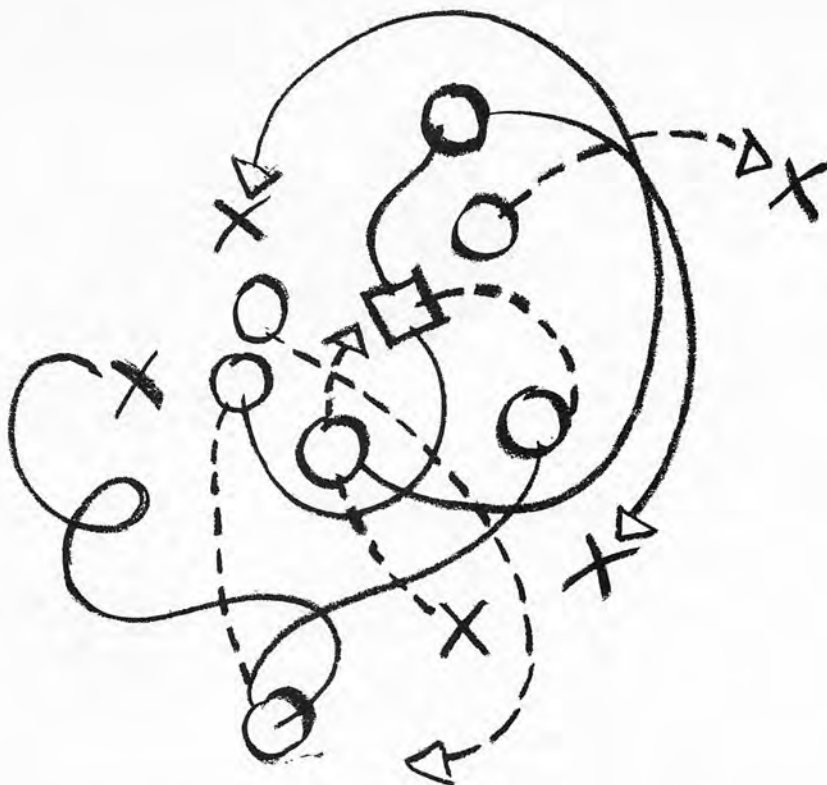


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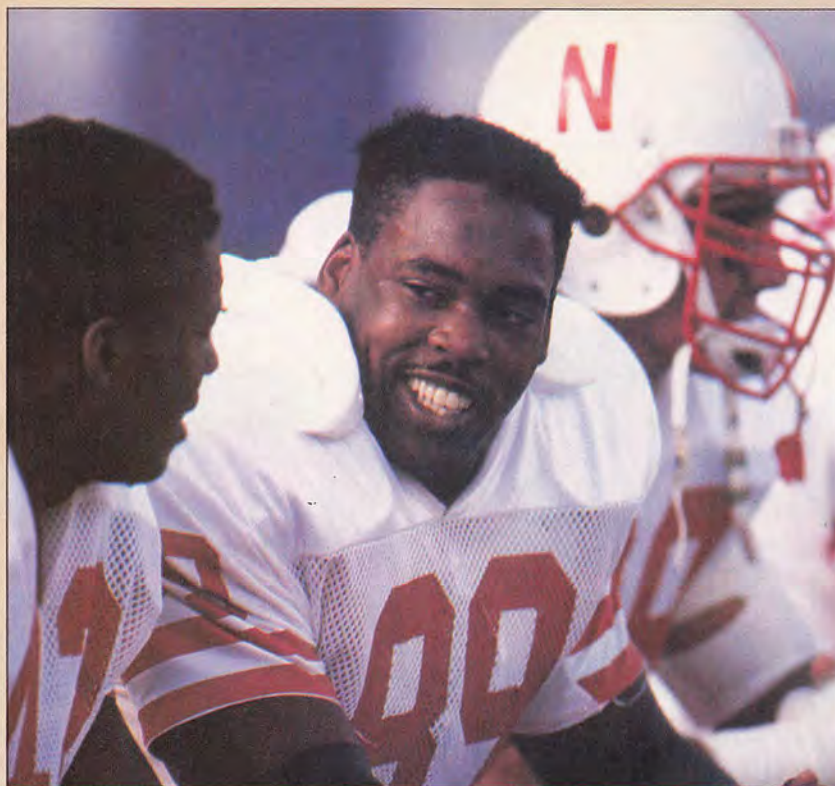
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# Empty Hourglass

*Sandman's time at Nebraska trickles away after a memorable career.*

*"...the ones who never yawn or say a commonplace thing, but burn, burn, burn like fabulous yellow roman candles exploding like spiders across the stars and in the middle you see the blue centerlight pop and everybody goes, 'Awww!'"*

—Jack Kerouac, from *On the Road*

Broderick Thomas is unique, one of a kind, a rare combination of athletic ability and showmanship, someone about whom others are rarely indifferent.

That was apparent from the beginning, when he added the following footnote to his oral commitment to Nebraska: "I told Coach (Tom) Osborne that as soon as I sign that paper (letter-of-intent) Wednesday morning, I'm loading my guns to start next year as a freshman."

Thomas was brash, supremely confident.

Oklahoma recruited him. The Soon-

ers "told me I should play defensive tackle," he said. "When I told 'em I was faster than their defensive ends, they told me I had a good point."

Several recruiters looked at the 6-foot-3, 235-pound Thomas and saw a defensive tackle. Barry Switzer was among them. But Thomas saw himself as a stand-up defender. That's why Oklahoma was eliminated from his final list.

"I don't know what I would have done if he had said, 'We'll play you at defensive end,'" Thomas said soon after arriving at Nebraska.

The notes from that first Thomas interview, during fall camp of his freshman year, are beginning to fade.

But the honesty and sincerity that are Thomas trademarks still come through.

Those notes provide a starting point for a brief recap of an outstanding Cornhusker career. You could call it "The Best of Broderick Thomas."

Nebraska's All-America outside line-

backer was heavily recruited out of Houston's Madison High, where, as a senior, he was the *Houston Post* 1984 Defensive Player of the Year.

He played defensive guard for a team that finished 12-0-1 that season.

In addition to Nebraska, he made recruiting visits to Texas, Texas A&M, Nevada-Las Vegas and Grambling, as well as Houston, on his own.

Thomas on recruiting, during fall camp in 1985, before he moved into the varsity locker room:

"A lot of schools would say, '(Tom) Osborne, he's not going to coach very long.' There's so much pressure. They call up and don't want to talk to your parents. They just want to talk to you about what they can give you.

"They don't want to talk about what I can help them accomplish. Sometimes, you just have to leave the phone alone.

"Coaches will walk up to you and say, 'You promised me a visit.' I'd say, 'Look

By Mike Babcock



man, I don't owe you a visit, and I'm not going to give you one. I don't have any interest in your school. And I don't want to visit.' A couple of times, my parents had to call the school and tell the recruiters I wouldn't visit.

"A couple of recruiters just showed up at my house, and my father said, 'You don't do this. You don't just come to my house. It's my house and you have to respect it. You have to make an appointment.' I don't think any youngster ought to deal with recruiters by himself. Anything they have to say to you, they should be able to say to your parents or your coach."

Thomas came from Texas during a time when several Southwest Conference schools were being investigated by the NCAA for recruiting violations.

He was adamant he couldn't be bought.

"I wasn't for sale. If I can start at Nebraska, I could be an All-American anywhere else. I came to play and get an education. If I don't play pro football, I've got a degree and I can say, 'Thank you, Nebraska.'"

"It's hard to pass up all that money, the nice cars. You see a guy who's only 18 years old, who doesn't work at all, just going to school, and his parents, they're staying in not one of the nicest areas of town. And next thing you know, he's driving a 300ZX and dressing nice. In high school, he doesn't have these things, and you wonder: 'Did he hit a gold mine?'"

"But you have to sacrifice for what you want in life. If I wanted all the cars and clothes and everything, I wouldn't be at Nebraska right now. I'd be somewhere else and my pockets would be full. I'd be enjoying myself, having somebody else going to class for me."

Midway through his first season at Nebraska, Thomas was told to move his equipment from the freshman locker room at the north end of Memorial Stadium to the varsity locker room.

When he began, George Darlington, now the secondary coach, was his position coach as a defensive end.

"I like it (his first season). It's gone better than I thought it would. I've been learning, and when they (the coaches) didn't think I knew enough, they had me play with the freshmen. The season's

gone by fast, very fast.

"I feel like I'm making progress. You should learn something the way they go over it with you. There's so much repetition. It's a lot faster game."

Thomas wore jersey No. 82 during his freshman year. Senior defensive end Scott Tucker wore No. 89.

Thomas: "I want No. 89. I'm hoping I can get it. But I'll wear any number. If I get in (the games), I'd wear No. 105, as far as I'm concerned. But I'd be very happy with No. 89."

Thomas' most memorable interview may have been one in October of 1986, his sophomore season. It was then that he elaborated on the derivation of his nicknames and offered a disclaimer to those who were comparing him to Oklahoma's controversial Brian Bosworth.

Many people were put off by his candor. But it was vintage Thomas.

"I'm not Bosworth. He talks a lot, but he talks in a negative way. I don't want people to think I'm just a loudmouth be-

cause I'm not. He's wild. You don't know what type of person he is: his mind might go off sometime.

"I'm not wild. When I'm on the field, the fun is knocking somebody around. That's football. But I'm a gentle guy off the field, friendly, you know."

That fact often was lost in the flurry of words characteristic of an interview with Thomas his first three years.

"Guys who try to talk noise to me don't bother me. I'm the master of the talking game. I'm the master of a physical game. I'm the master of disaster," Thomas proclaimed.

He was also the "Sandman," a nickname he earned in high school.

"I happen to like it. As far as I'm concerned, it'll always be Broderick 'The Sandman' Thomas.

"It'll never be just Broderick Thomas again if I write it. Whenever I look up in the sky and see the name 'Broderick Thomas,' I'll always open it up and put 'The Sandman' in there, too.

**Especially as a senior, Thomas conducted Memorial Stadium's noise-making orchestra.**







**As a sophomore, Thomas was called the Black Bosworth — something he detested.**

"There's not another 'Sandman' in the world. I believe no one else is like Broderick Thomas."

No one argued the point with him.

There may have been times when Osborne breathed easier about that. Based on ability, he'd have taken 11 Thomases on defense. But the pre-game talk...

Prior to the Oklahoma game in 1986, Thomas said the Cornhuskers were good enough defensively to shut down the Sooners, who led the nation in rushing offense, total offense and scoring offense, claiming: "We have the best defense in the nation."

Offensively, Nebraska was capable of scoring 60 or 70 points on anyone, according to Thomas.

Twenty-one points would have been sufficient. The Cornhuskers lost 20-17.

After the game, Thomas made a public apology for the loss.

"And I've got two more years to make good on that apology," he said. "The

next time they come in here, they can expect to get punished. Somehow on the scoreboard it shows they beat us, but they know who won the game. Oklahoma didn't beat us today, not those 11 guys out there in red and white."

A year later, after Thomas and Steve Taylor led a verbal assault on Oklahoma, the scoreboard in Memorial Stadium read: Oklahoma 17, Nebraska 7.

The assault began 10 days before the game, when Thomas told a reporter: "I know they'll (the media) talk to me because I'll talk to anyone about anything. People in the media try to single me out because I guess they like to hear that kind of talk when I get excited. I get hyped up, and they want to hear what I've got to say."

"They did it with Brian Bosworth and made him appear some kind of maniac. He's not that bad a guy. I'm not that bad a guy. I'm not going to be manipulated into doing that."

Two days before the game, the Sandman was in rare form:

"I don't think about losing because it's not going to happen. You only think about those things when it's a possibility. We're not looking that way. It's all a positive attitude."

Thomas established a metaphor for Memorial Stadium the previous season, after a 30-10 victory over Oklahoma State, calling it "our house."

Thomas: "It's like they thought they were playing in a cow pasture, and it's not so. You come in. You give respect. And you leave...with a loss."

His comments about respecting "our house" were reminiscent of those regarding his father's response to the over-zealous college recruiters.

Oklahoma players had picked up on the metaphor on the Big Eight Skywriters Tour, terming it their "winter home."

Thomas responded: "Is that right? Well, tell them to come on in their winter home and take a vacation."

Oklahoma's dramatic, come-from-behind victory the previous season gave rise to the concept of "Sooner Magic."

Thomas had a ready answer for that, too: "Houdini is not allowed in our house, so there's not going to be any fourth-quarter magic around here, unless we're doing it."

Unfortunately for Nebraska, his prediction didn't come true until this season, in Oklahoma's house.

Thomas made good on most of his promises, and he made certain that most of his predications came true.

After the Cornhuskers were upset by Colorado in 1986, 20-10 in Boulder, he knelt down and promised the Buffaloes would never beat Nebraska again during his Cornhusker career.

Prior to the 1987 Sugar Bowl game against Louisiana State, Thomas predicted: "We're going to start our 1987 hell-raising tour against LSU."

"I don't know who their quarterback is, but I pray to God he lasts two quarters. He will get punished. LSU expects to get hit, and I won't disappoint. I will bring the wood."

"If I don't get blocked, bring out the stretcher because somebody's going to need it." Nebraska won, 30-15.

Before the South Carolina game in



Lincoln, his junior year, Thomas defined Black Shirt-style football.

"It's a bunch of 'oooh, aaah, wow,' stuff like that. You can't explain it. Be there and watch it Saturday. It's going to be exciting. I promise you that," said the irrepressible Thomas.

It was, and Nebraska won, 30-21.

The loss to Oklahoma at the end of the season, followed by a 31-28 loss to Florida State in the Sunkist-Fiesta Bowl, seemed to have an effect on the once-quotable Thomas. During his final spring practice, he declined to make predictions for his senior year.

"I've got things in mind, but I'm going to chill out, take it easy, wait 'til everything gets to rolling."

Even when things began to roll, after the Cornhuskers regrouped following the 42-28 loss to UCLA, Thomas remained silent, for all intents and purposes.

He sidestepped reporters' attempts to draw him into controversy, from the Big Eight Skywriters Tour on.

Thomas explained: "I don't have much to say. I've basically kept my mouth shut. I've got things to say. I'm just saying them with my helmet."

At first, "it was like, 'Well, he's just going to be quiet for a while. He'll come out and say something.' It's kind of hilarious. Sometimes, I have to say it three or four times to the same guy. 'No comment.' He might even go away, reword the question and come back. But I still tell him, 'No comment.' If the media has something to say, then let the media say it. I'll let my Bike (helmet) do my talking."

Thomas broke his silence after the Cornhuskers beat Oklahoma 7-3 to earn their first trip to the Orange Bowl since his arrival at Nebraska.

He talked about how the time had come for a change at the top in the Big Eight, quotable stuff certainly, but nothing inflammatory.

He was too happy to do that.

Then came the barrage, during an interview with the Associated Press, conducted while Thomas was in Atlanta. The focus was West Virginia.

Thomas: "West Virginia hasn't played anybody. What have they played, one team in the Top 20? How can a team like that win the national championship?"

Mountaineer quarterback Major Harris "just isn't that good. There are lot of quarterbacks better than him."

The Sandman was on a roll.

"I don't see anybody in college football who can control a game like me. In the eyes of my teammates, I'm the best in America. I think I will be one of the No. 1 linebackers in the world.

"I want to be one of the best linebackers who ever played, one of the best outside linebackers anybody has ever seen," he told the reporter. "I think every defensive player would like to play for the (Los Angeles) Raiders because they play defense the way it's supposed to be played. I'd love to wear the silver and black.

"I think I can help Al Davis regain a world championship and I think he could keep me happy by keeping my pockets stuffed. Ever since I was a kid, I've had it in the back of my mind I'd like to play for the Raiders."

Thomas was back in form, the way

Nebraska fans will remember him.

The Best of Broderick.

"My father always told me, 'Unless you're right, keep your mouth shut. If you're wrong, keep quiet.'

"If I'm not confident enough to do my job, I'll keep my mouth shut. Talking doesn't win ball games. You have to go out there and execute, do things well, in order to open your mouth.

"The only way I'm going to open my mouth is if I'm confident."

You can take that at face value. Thomas is abundantly confident.

"Playing ball, I'm going to raise hell 'til I can't raise hell no more. I want to be great," he said.

"I want people to remember me."

He needn't worry about that.

Cornhusker fans won't forget him.

Thomas was a personality.

Someone else will wear No. 89 next season, but it'll be a long time before the number actually belongs to someone other than Thomas. ■

*Broderick Thomas*



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# The Hottest Huskers

Best team, ever?

Tom Baack first realized the 1965-66 Nebraska basketball team was special in the fourth game of the season, a 70-68 victory over California in Berkeley.

The Cornhuskers had lost to California the previous night, 87-71, when their full-court press failed them.

They found themselves trailing the Golden Bears by 15 points in the second half of the second game, without guard Grant Simmons, who had been ejected for fighting. The senior from Omaha was, without question, the team leader.

Simmons' unexpected departure inspired Nebraska that night, according to Baack, the head basketball coach at Concordia College in Seward, Neb.

"I think that was the turning point. We came back without him," Baack said.

Nate Branch, whose 3-point play with 46 seconds remaining gave the Cornhuskers their first lead (68-66) since early in the game, tipped in a missed jump shot by Baack as time elapsed for the victory.

Nebraska won five more games before losing again (in the championship game of the Big Eight preseason tournament at venerable Municipal Auditorium in Kansas City).

Kansas won the first of three meetings between the teams, 71-61.

More about that later.

First, let's establish the premise here. That 1965-66 team, the third coached by the late Joe Cipriano, was the best in Nebraska history.

That's a subject for debate. It's not cut-and-dried, of course.

Jumbo Steihm, remembered most for Cornhusker football teams that went 35-2-3 in his five seasons as head coach, directed Nebraska basketball teams to a combined 46-6 record from 1911 to 1914.

Led by guard Sam Carrier, the school's first All-America selection, and All-Missouri Valley Conference forward Ross Haskell, the 1912-13 team went 17-2.

The first of two teams coached by P.J.

Schissler went 22-2 in 1919-20, still the best record in school history.

All-Big Seven performers Bus Whitehead and Claude Retherford led the 1948-49 team to Nebraska's first NCAA post-season tournament appearance, a 52-35 playoff loss to Oklahoma A&M, coached by the legendary Henry P. Iba, who, of course, is the father of Nebraska's 23rd head coach, Moe Iba.

Cipriano's 1977-78 team went 22-8 and survived one round of the National Invitation Tournament.

Moe Iba's 1982-83 team also won 22 games, with 10 losses, and reached the NIT semifinals, a 68-58 loss to DePaul in New York's historic Madison Square

Garden. And his 1985-86 team reached the NCAA tournament's Southeast Regional in Charlotte, N.C.

Danny Nee's first team in 1986-87 finished 21-12 and also went to Madison Square Garden, where it defeated Arkansas-Little Rock, 76-67, in overtime for third place in the NIT.

But the 1965-66 team was unique.

"We're talking about good athletes, with great speed and quickness," said Baack, a forward and one of the team's two sophomore starters.

The other was guard Stu Lantz, "probably the best player the school's ever had," according to Baack.

Lantz, who now works as a Los Angeles Lakers' broadcaster, went on to a successful career in the NBA after earning All-Big Eight his final two seasons.

The 1965-66 Nebraska team was "pretty good," Lantz will tell you. "But you can't compare teams and say one's greater than another.

"I can't say that, anyway. You can argue about it. But the athletes are so much better now," said Lantz.

Better athletes? Maybe.

But the 1965-66 Cornhuskers had a "chemistry that's hard to explain," Baack said. "We had a great relationship and respect."

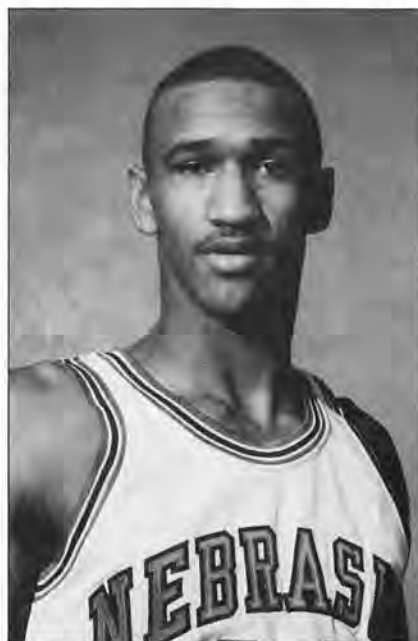
And consider what they accomplished.

Nebraska finished second in the Big Eight, with a 20-5 record. Prior to their third meeting with Kansas, at Allen Fieldhouse in Lawrence, the Cornhuskers were ranked eighth in the nation by the Associated Press.

They've never been ranked higher.

Only one Big Eight team could advance to a much-smaller NCAA tournament field in the mid-1960s, and Nebraska didn't get a bid from the 16-team NIT, though "I think we could've done very well in either tournament," said Baack.

The high point in the season was the second Kansas game, played before a capacity crowd of 8,566 at the NU Coliseum on Jan. 18, 1966.



One reason people say the 1965-66 Huskers were the best is Stu Lantz, now a sportscaster.



The Cornhuskers defeated sixth-ranked Kansas that night, 83-75, to move into first place in the Big Eight. Branch scored 18 points. Lantz scored 15. Baack contributed 14. Simmons finished with 12. Willie Campbell and Jim Damm each had 11 points.

Such balanced scoring typified Nebraska — that and a devastating full-court press unveiled in a season-opening, 101-88 victory at Wisconsin. The 101 points represented a single-game, school record at the time.

"The press was the key to our team," said Baack. "We worked on it about an hour a day in practice."

He was the rover. Lantz and Simmons were on the guards. Campbell was on the ball. And Branch was the safety.

The press worked best in the Coliseum, which was like a sixth defender of concrete, brick and steel.

From 1926 to 1975, Nebraska played 512 games in the Coliseum and won 328, 64 percent. And yet, during that time, Nebraska had only 15 winning seasons.

The Cornhuskers were 11-0 at home in 1965-66, a winning streak they increased to a school-record 20 during the 1966-67 season.

"When we stepped on that floor, we knew we were going to win, even if we didn't play well," Baack said. "We had about a 15-point advantage."

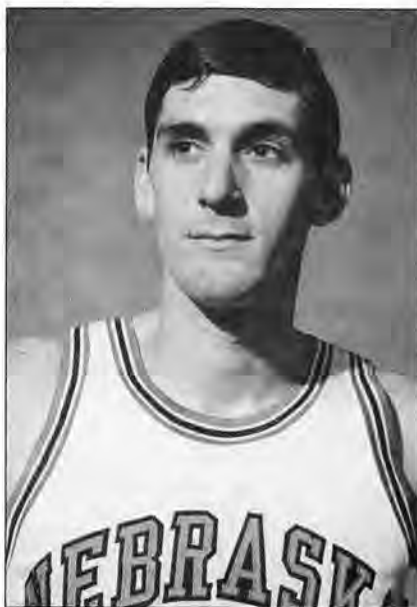
"It could be intimidating."

"It was fun sitting down in the locker room, hearing the fans pounding their feet against the floor. It started 15 minutes before the game and just kept building. From a confidence standpoint, you always knew you were going to be successful there."

Because it held only 8,500 for basketball, the Coliseum filled up early, with hardcore fans who didn't mind the uncomfortable plank seats.

Because of their proximity to the action and the anonymity caused by the lights' being turned out everywhere except over the court, fans were extremely vocal. When the lights went down and the show began, everyone's attention was focused on the hardwood floor. And for 40 minutes, the Coliseum was the center of the universe.

Nebraska basketball wasn't a tranquil experience. A frenzy attended the opening tip, and it settled over the audience



**Grant Simmons was NU's team leader in '65-66.**

like the ever-present aroma of popcorn from the machine not far from the goal at the south end.

Willie Grummert (everyone knew him) would send ice cream bars sailing into the upper reaches of the seats. The fluorescent glow from press row lent an eeriness to the entire scene.

Students would help the officials by counting loudly, 1-to-10, as opposing teams attempted to beat the 10-second clock to mid-court against the relentless Nebraska press.

Even the floor was unique. When a player began his dribble, there was a kind of surreal interaction between ball and floor. "It was an exceptional playing surface, well-constructed, with good give to it," said Baack.

However, opposing teams rarely had an opportunity to appreciate that.

And it was never more apparent than late in the first half of the victory over Kansas that Tuesday night.

The Cornhuskers trailed by as many as nine points midway through the half.

They didn't take their first lead until a Campbell tip-in with 2:03 remaining made the score 31-30. It was then Nebraska turned up the pressure and outscored the bewildered Jayhawks 12-2 in the final two minutes for a 43-33 lead at intermission.

Damm, a sophomore and sixth man, came off the bench to spark the surge.

A week later, Nebraska moved into the nation's Top 20 (at No. 13) for the first time in school history.

The Cornhuskers' third loss in 1965-66 came on a road trip to the Sooner State.

After hard-fought conference victories over Oklahoma State (45-41 in overtime) and Oklahoma (85-81), Nebraska lost a non-conference game to a good Oklahoma City University team 85-81 in overtime.

Three victories later, the Cornhuskers played Kansas for the third time.

And it was all Kansas, 110-73.

Al Lopes led the balanced Kansas attack, scoring a game-high 19 points. Del Lewis and Roger Bohnenstiehl each scored 17 points. And big Walt Wesley, who Nebraska could never seem to contain, added 16 points and pulled down nine rebounds.

Despite the loss, however, Nebraska remained tied with the Jayhawks for the Big Eight lead. The crusher came two games later, when Colorado, a second-division team, upset the Cornhuskers behind 6-foot-7 senior Chuck Gardner's 42 points, 95-88, in Boulder.

Baack led Nebraska with 29 points, and the Cornhuskers shot 51 percent from the field. But they led only once, 8-7, against the hot-shooting Buffaloes, who hit 54 percent from the field to the delight of 6,000 in Balch Fieldhouse.

Nebraska finished 12-2 in Big Eight play, one game behind Kansas and three games ahead of third-place Kansas State.

If the Huskers had won at Colorado and tied the Jayhawks for first place, the teams would have met in a playoff game, scheduled for Manhattan, Kan.

But that was not to be.

The key losses to graduation were Simmons and Fred Hare, both of whom rank in the Top 50 on Nebraska's career scoring list — along with Baack and Lantz, fifth and sixth, respectively.



The 1966-67 Cornhuskers finished 16-9 and played in the NIT, losing a forgettable first-round game in Madison Square Garden to Marshall, 119-88.

The 1965-66 magic just wasn't there.

The magic couldn't be explained on a regional basis. Of the first seven, Simmons and Hare were the only Nebraskans, Simmons having played at Omaha Benson, Hare at Omaha Tech.

Baack was from Fort Wayne, Ind. Campbell was from Seattle, Wash.

Branch was from Palo Alto, Calif. Damm was from Bellflower, Calif.

And Lantz was a high school All-American from Uniontown, Pa., who came to Nebraska along with his best friend, football player Ben Gregory.

Gregory and Lantz grew up together, attending the same grammar school, the same junior high and the same high school. "We decided we'd go to the same place (college), the farthest away (from Uniontown)," said Lantz, who

now makes his home in San Diego.

Nebraska became interested in Lantz because of the football team's recruitment of Gregory.

Lantz, who stood only 6-3, could play any position. During the Big Eight tournament (with Campbell injured) he even filled in at center.

He led the Cornhuskers in rebounding for three consecutive seasons and ranks ninth on Nebraska's all-time list.

Lantz, who was runner-up in Big Eight Sophomore of the Year voting in 1966, ranks 10th on the school's career field-goal percentage list.

The 6-5 Baack led the team in scoring during the 1965-66 season, averaging 15.4 points per game, shooting 54.2 percent from the field and 85.2 percent from the free throw line.

Only one Cornhusker has ever shot free throws better, the late Jack Moore. Baack's .832 ranks second only to Moore's remarkable .901 on Nebraska's

career free throw percentage list.

Simmons, who stood 6-3, was second on the team in scoring, with a 15.2 points-per-game average. He was All-Big Eight and All-American in 1965-66.

Branch, who was 6-4, averaged 13.5 points per game and was second to Lantz in rebounding. "The Dipper" received All-America honorable mention and toured with the Harlem Globetrotters. He ranks 15th on Nebraska's career scoring list, 42 points short of 1,000.

At just under 6-6, Campbell was the team's tallest starter and an exceptional athlete whose speed and quickness were crucial to the press.

"We were so small," said Baack.

But they played hard.

In addition to Hare (one of the best scorers ever to come out of Nebraska) and Damm, who shot better than 52 percent from the field, the Cornhusker bench included Coley Webb, a 6-5 senior from Elkhart, Ind.; Ron Simmons, a 6-0 sophomore from Sumner, Neb.; and Frank Empkey, a 6-6 junior from Omaha Benson who transferred from Peru State.

The remaining players on the roster were Charlie Stone, a 6-9 sophomore from Oakland, Calif., who didn't play high school basketball; Al Reiners, a 6-8 senior from Hastings, Neb.; and Dick Davidson, a 6-6 sophomore from McDonald, Pa., who appeared in only three games.

Davidson averaged 11.1 points per game on a 3-5 Nebraska freshman team the previous season. Baack averaged 19.3 points, Lantz 18.4 points, and Ron Simmons 11.9 points for that team.

At the same time, Cipriano's second Cornhusker varsity team, led by the scoring and rebounding of Hare, was struggling to finish with a 10-15 record, which included an historic, 74-73 upset of top-ranked Michigan.

That team "had some ability. It was just missing a couple of players," according to Baack.

But even he couldn't have imagined the difference a couple — specifically, he and Lantz — would make.

A year later, "the pieces all fit together," Baack said.

Nebraska has never had a basketball team like it, before or since. ■



**Nate "The Dipper" Branch was a key to Nebraska's success in 1965-66.**



Mark Owens

## The Unanswerable Question

HOW GOOD WAS NEBRASKA IN 1988?  
THE ANSWER CHANGED WEEKLY, FROM SUPER TO SO-SO,  
EVEN IN THE ORANGE BOWL.

MIAMI, Fla. — The question was posed last April as Nebraska stripped off its armor of spring practice, and journalistic wags tried to size up Big Red football for 1988. Because the Huskers were so hard to figure, the plea of “Will the *real* Nebraska football team please stand up?” went frustratingly unanswered over the summer.

If you follow the Huskers long enough, you assume Nebraska teams will always have a definitive identity: something like “Scoring Explosion” or “Game of the Century” or “Nation’s Best Defense” or even “Our House.” Something you can sink your teeth into. Something final. Something forever. Something — anything!

The '88 season closed with a 23-3 loss to swift Miami on its turf in the Orange Bowl Classic, and it finally became clear that this Husker team could not be pinned down with a single label. There was no single, definitive, absolute, *real* Nebraska in 1988. This Husker unit was a flowing river — never the same twice — changing week to week, improving then digressing, occasionally flooding over its banks into the fertile, lush lowlands of college football elitism only to shrink suddenly in a parched drought.

There was no *real* Nebraska in 1988. Instead, there were many Nebraskas.

The one that came to the Orange Bowl was pretty darn good, especially on defense; but Miami was better than this particular version of Big Red football.

If, for example, former-Oklahoma State coach Jimmy Johnson had led his Hurricanes against the Nebraska of late-September, Miami might have scored as often as the U of M fans were rude, which was not infrequently. It's just that the Black Shirts were generous souls back then, giving up points and yards



The Husker pass rush always seemed close to dumping Steve Walsh (4).

charitably ala the goodwill of collegiate defense. But NU changed.

And *changed* might be too conservative a word. By November — and even into January — the Black Shirts had a new, less-cooperative personality, deboning Colorado (zero points) and Oklahoma (three points) before holding Miami to its second lowest point total of its season.

Was Nebraska an “outstanding” defensive team in 1988? Perhaps UCLA and Oklahoma State, both scoring over 40 points on NU, would say no. Evidence in the Miami case opened and closed on Jan. 2 before about 75,000

fans (of which about 60,000 were Hurricane supporters), indicated yes.

You see, the 1989 Orange Bowl came down to Nebraska's up-to-date defense versus Miami's defense, formidable as it was. Tom Osborne's Black Shirt crew held talented quarterback Steve Walsh to 277 yards passing (this is the same guy who ripped No. 1 Notre Dame for over 400), intercepted him three times, sacked him twice, and did this all while the Husker offense struggled with field position that was as conducive to effective running as quicksand.

All-American linebacker Broderick Thomas rushed Walsh effectively, sack-



ing him once, though that dump was of the flag-football variety (Walsh seemed to slip). Still, Thomas was constantly in Walsh's face, pressuring throws and crashing into the All-American passer seemingly every play. NU blitzed with

abandon — by Husker standards — and it was a strangely aesthetic thing to see.

One play stands out.

There was senior cornerback Lorenzo Hicks, all 6-feet and 190 pounds of him, lined up over the Hurricane center

like a modern-day Dick Butkus. Hicks was lined up where no cornerback has possibly ever lined up before — then he blitzed! He sprinted untouched and stuffed Walsh for Nebraska's other sack, which raised Miami's sack total for 1988 from six to eight.

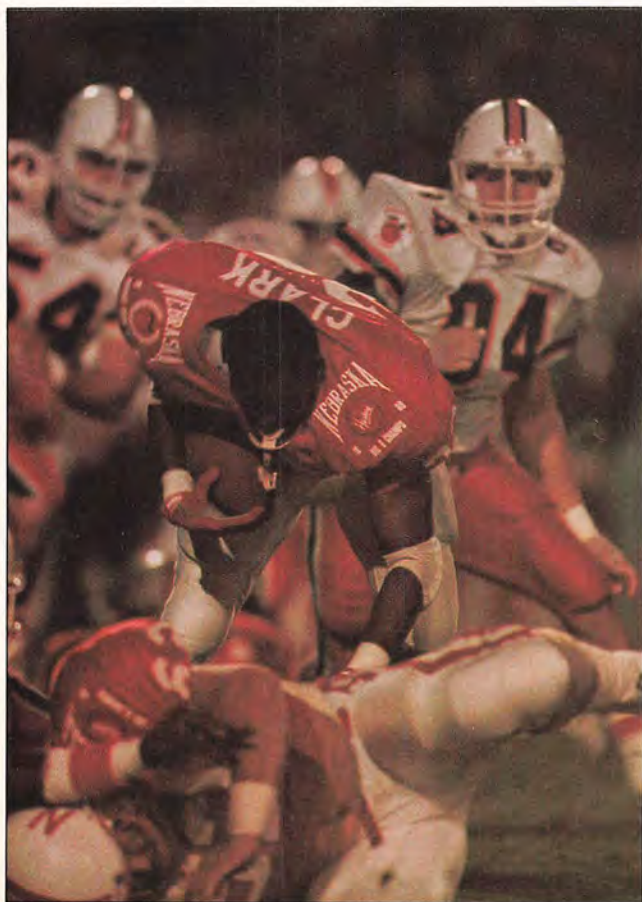
Ultra-quick outside linebacker Mike Croel was unveiled for the first time this year (to the extent that he played early and often against Miami instead of as a reserve) as a blitzing missile. He made four tackles and rushed effectively.

NU's other cornerback, Charles Fryar, sparkled against what was arguably the best college passing team in 1988. Fryar intercepted Walsh twice, cleanly broke up a pass, supported the run nicely on a 4-yard tackle behind the line and finished with seven tackles. By night's end, Walsh would complete less than 50 percent of his passes (21 of 44). Anyone who had seen the Hurricanes score 31 on Florida State and Michigan plus 30 on the Irish and 44 on LSU could have seen clearly these were not the same Black Shirts who had given up 41 to UCLA and 42 to OSU. Something had, indeed, changed.

And yes, Nebraska had also changed on offense.

NU's offensive productivity over its last three games totaled 17 points, which contrasted starkly with the Huskers' 46-point average of mid-October. Perhaps the biggest change in Nebraska's offense was the absence of I-back Terry Rodgers. Rodgers had shared quality playing time with All-Big Eight Ken Clark (who rushed for 1,497 powerful yards) before the son of former NU great Johnny Rodgers blew out a knee in practice last fall. When Rodgers limped to the sideline, he took his 4.38 speed and elusiveness with him, and Nebraska was down to its last big-play threat — Steve Taylor.

Barry Switzer said before the NU-OU Big Eight title game that he would be facing "The Steve Taylor Show," and Johnson said repeatedly during pre-bowl events that the multi-talented Taylor was a multi-faceted nightmare. "Michigan and Notre Dame both had gifted quarterbacks who could run and throw effectively, and we had trouble with both guys," said Johnson. "Taylor's scrambling scares me to death."



**Steve Taylor (9, above) was the focus of Miami's blitz, while Ken Clark (32, left) and the Husker ground game struggled.**



Perhaps as a matter of survival then, Johnson devised a defensive scheme to thwart Nebraska's alleged one-man show: the 'Canes blitzed.

"We were bringing five or six or seven people on every play, looping the ends out wide to contain Taylor," Johnson explained after what was essentially a rout, even by intermission. We spent a lot of time in practice on containing Taylor."

It worked.

Nebraska's two-time, All-Big Eight quarterback rushed for 12 yards on 17 carries, the most rushing attempts for NU this night. It was Taylor's second lowest rushing output of the 1988 season.

By season's end, it appeared foes were getting wise to Nebraska. Missouri blitzed furiously, dropping Taylor for 38 net yards in losses while confounding the Husker offense for two quarters. Colorado keyed on the quarterback effectively and was probably only a freak, open-field fumble away from a tie. OU also tried the "Stop Steve" trick, pulling it off to a degree but only after sustaining fatal injuries in the first half. Although Clark was blossoming by late-season, opponents were more concerned about nipping Taylor in the bud. Their pruning shears? The blitz.

Nebraska's offensive linemen courageously stepped forward to shoulder responsibility in defeat. "We just didn't get the job done so that Steve (Taylor) could have time to operate," said senior left tackle Bob Sledge. But stopping the hostile 'Canes — Johnson said his players were steamed when Notre Dame clinched No. 1 — may have been asking too much of any offensive line.

Such speed.

You see, Nebraska's difficulty in the 1989 Orange Bowl probably started a decade before. That's when former Miami coach Lou Saben first started having success at keeping Florida schoolboy stars at home. Johnson certainly doesn't take credit for this critical time in the 'Cane program.

"Saben overcame the losing mentality and made it exciting to stay here," Johnson explained during pre-bowl interviews. "Then Howard Schnellenberger kept the momentum.

"What I added in the way of a 'sys-



The Orange Bowl halftime show was spectacular, but so was Miami's defense.

tem' was simply to recruit kids with the intelligence, height and speed to play a lot of positions. For example, we'll take a high school linebacker and turn him into a tackle, or we'll get a tight end with speed and athletic ability and move him to linebacker."

As one South Florida sports writer would say, "Miami's only defensive gameplan is lateral speed."

So now you can see why defining the real Nebraska offense of 1988 is so

difficult. Was it "average" by NU standards? Hardly — Nebraska led the nation in rushing (382 yards a game). Some media types speculate that the Kickoff Classic took a toll, but the Black Shirts certainly didn't seem to wilt. Osborne even had to defend his power-running philosophy on a day when option standard-bearers Oklahoma and Arkansas likewise faltered. "We might change some plays," he said. "But we're not going to throw the baby out with the

## SCORING SUMMARY

### Miami 23, Nebraska 3

Miami .....	7	13	0	3	— 23
Nebraska .....	0	0	3	0	— 3

Miami — Conley 22 pass from Walsh (Huerta kick).  
 Miami — Huerta 18 FG.  
 Miami — Conley 42 pass from Walsh (Huerta kick).  
 Miami — Huerta 37 FG.  
 NU — Barrios 50 FG.  
 Miami — Huerta 37 FG.

Attendance: 79,480



bath water."

More likely, though, Osborne's 16th offense probably just ran afoul of some pretty stout defenses down the stretch, and Miami was the best — this night.

About the game itself, Miami (ranked No. 2 both before and after the Orange Bowl) scored all the points it needed midway through the first quarter on a 22-yard pass from Walsh to sophomore halfback Leonard Conley. The scoring drive was only 33 yards because the Hurricanes enjoyed excellent field position after intercepting Steve Taylor (the first of three pick-offs).

Next, Miami added a second-quarter field goal after yet another interception to take a 10-0 lead, having started from

midfield on that drive. Three minutes later, Walsh hit Conley over the middle and the 5-9, 170-pounder eluded several Black Shirt grabs to score down the sideline from 42 yards out. Shockingly, the Hurricanes then inflicted a blocked punt (NU's first such blotch of the season) at the Husker 11-yard line just three minutes before intermission. The Black Shirts held, but Miami still kicked a 37-yard field goal and upped its lead to 20-0, which had for all practical purposes turned this game into a landslide.

Why?

Because (1) the Hurricane defense was quick and (2) the Cornhusker offense could not compensate for that quick-

ness. Nebraska had two first downs at the half.

NU opened the third period with reasonable success, enough at least to give Gregg Barrios a 50-yard field goal attempt just over five minutes into the second half, which he made to avert Nebraska's first shutout since a 27-0 loss to Oklahoma in the final game of the 1973 regular season, Osborne's first as a head coach.

It was a career-best for Barrios, a red-shirt sophomore.

The scoring drive, a modest 5 yards in three plays, was set up by a 31-yard interception return by sophomore cornerback Tahaun Lewis.

But that was it.

## PLAYER OF THE GAME

# Fryar Steals the Show

Senior right cornerback Charles Fryar basked in the limelight.

Against one of college football's best quarterbacks and one of its best passing teams, Nebraska's 5-foot-10, 175-pound veteran defensive back made two interceptions, broke up another pass and recorded seven total tackles, one of which was behind the line of scrimmage.

His tackle total was second highest for Nebraska in its Orange Bowl battle.

All told, second-ranked Miami was held to its second lowest scoring total of the season, even though it was more than enough in a convincing 23-3 victory.

For his efforts, Fryar has been honored as the *Huskers Illustrated* Player of the Game.

This Burlington, N.J., native ended his Cornhusker career as a three-year starter and All-Big Eight performer this past fall. In Nebraska's gutsy defensive effort against Miami, Fryar went out in style, albeit in defeat.

"I thought we had an excellent gameplan for stopping (Steve) Walsh, and it seemed to work most



Senior cornerback Charles Fryar intercepted Miami twice.

of the time," Fryar explained. "But on the two touchdown passes we just made some mistakes in coverage and then missed some tackles on the long one (a 40-yard scoring reception by Leonard Conley). Overall, we gave it a good shot, but we still needed to do better."

It's hard to imagine the Black Shirts or any defense playing much more effectively.

NU held the slick Hurricane passing attack to under 50 percent on completions, intercepted the 'Canes three times, broke up four passes and sacked Walsh twice. It was easily the most productive defensive effort of any team against Miami during the '88 season.

Fryar finished his Black Shirt career with 19 total pass breakups (bowl results not included), which tied the school record held by Marv Mueller, Jim Anderson and Bret Clark.

Other Huskers in the running for Player of the Game honors were LeRoy Etienne (with a game-high 12 tackles) and Broderick Thomas, who put considerable pass rushing heat on the Hurricanes.



Miami would later add a meaningless field goal.

Clark would finish with a team-high 36 yards on 14 carries despite suffering from a hip pointer. Taylor hit 8-of-21 passes for 55 yards, with junior wingback Richard Bell leading all Husker receivers with two catches for 39 yards. Senior linebacker LeRoy Etienne led defenders for both teams with a game-high 12 tackles.

Miami finished with a solid edge in first downs (20-10), passing yards (285-55) and total offense (354-135) while Nebraska held a modest lead in rushing yards (80-69). The Huskers converted but one third down all night.

Still, the 1988 season came to a close with much to be proud of. This was Osborne's first 11-win season (11-2 and ranked 10th in the final Associated Press poll). Nebraska claimed the NCAA record for 27 consecutive winning seasons. The Huskers won an outright Big Eight crown and otherwise enjoyed the bowl trip.

There can be little doubt, for example, that Husker recruiting enjoyed a boost. NBC cameras scanned the NU sideline and only re-inforced to bowl-watching schoolboys that when the Huskers go to a bowl, everybody goes (over 170 athletes made the trip).

Aside from a minor technicality with the scoreboard (23-3 in favor of Miami just didn't look right), the trip was a good experience for a good team that

just didn't put it all together this particular night.

"It's been an unusual year," Osborne later said. "We've played excellent football at times. But it's usually been the case where the defense will play well while the offense has trouble, or the offense clicks but we have trouble stop-

ping people. This team just didn't seem to put it all together in a single game."

So, when fans shoot the bull on the eve of the year 2000 thinking back on the great Nebraska teams of the 20th century and someone asks about the 1988 squad, the most enlightened answer may simply be, "Which one?" ■



**Tahaun Lewis' (5) third-quarter interception set up a 50-yard field goal.**

<b>SEASON RECAP</b>	8/27 A&M	9/3 USU	9/10 UCLA	9/24 ASU	10/1 UNLV	10/8 KU	10/15 OSU	10/22 KSU	10/29 MU	11/5 ISU	11/12 CU	11/9 OU	BOWL	SEASON AVERAGE
<b>First Downs</b>	19	34	21	29	26	38	28	32	9	29	16	13	10	23
<b>Yards Rushing</b>	201	421	260	441	444	547	570	479	116	566	278	265	80	359
<b>Yards Passing</b>	125	169	125	29	56	118	92	143	153	71	18	48	55	93
<b>Fumbles - Lost</b>	5-3	0-0	2-1	2-0	1-0	1-0	0-0	1-1	7-3	3-1	3-2	1-1	1-0	2-1
<b>Time of Possession</b>	60%	54%	44%	57%	59%	54%	53%	65%	48%	53%	51%	51%	49%	53%
<b>Third Down Conversions</b>	50%	50%	46%	45%	56%	40%	58%	63%	15%	69%	17%	38%	8%	42%
<b>Final Score</b>	23-14	63-14	28-41	47-16	48-6	63-10	63-42	48-3	26-18	51-16	7-0	7-3	3-23	36-16



## NOTES AND QUOTES

Senior safety Mark Blazek concluded his career with yet more awards. For the second year in a row he was named GTE/CoSIDA Academic All-American, and the Valparaiso, Neb., native was given the CBS/Toyota Leadership Award for the 1988 season. This accompanies his National Football Foundation/Hall of Fame Post-Graduate Scholarship. He now becomes the seventh two-time Academic All-American in Nebraska annals. The others were Ted Harvey (1976-77), Randy Schleusener (1979-80), Randy Theiss (1981-82), Dave Rimington (1981-82), Scott Strasburger (1983-84) and Rob Stuckey (1983-84).

In the 1980s, 15 Husker football players have made Academic All-American 22 times.

Blazek was joined on the Academic All-American team by senior punter John Kroeker. Senior offensive guard John Nelson and junior center Jake Young were second-team selections.

Nebraska now leads the nation with

41 first-team Academic All-American selections.

During Tom Osborne's 16-year career, the Cornhuskers have produced 31 first-team Academic All-Americans and 115 Academic All-Big Eight selections, top in the conference.

Despite struggling against Miami, Nebraska's 1988 offensive line will surely go down as one of the most decorated in Husker history since that line featured an All-American (Young), two All-Big Eight honorees (tackle Bob Sledge and guard Andy Keeler), one second-team all-conference selection (junior tackle Doug Glaser) and an Academic All-Big Eight honoree (guard John Nelson). Every member of the starting five received some kind of prestigious recognition...

On the wrestling front, Coach Tim Neuman's highly ranked Huskers reached a milestone when they upset traditional power Iowa State, 19-14, this season. ISU, ranked fourth in the nation

by *Amateur Wrestling News* before the loss, hadn't fallen to Nebraska since 1951. The Huskers were ranked No. 16 before this season's Cyclone dual.

In Neuman's three-phase plan to push the Huskers into national prominence, NU's victory over Iowa State marked the completion of phase two: his teams have now beaten traditional mat kings Oklahoma (in 1987) and Iowa State in duals, leaving just Oklahoma State among the conference's "Big Three."

Nebraska came close earlier this season when top-ranked OSU escaped with a 19-14 win in Stillwater, having to rally with wins in the last three weights to stave off the Cornhusker upset bid.

Earlier this season, Nebraska finished eighth in the prestigious Las Vegas Invitational, which featured 38 teams and more than a dozen schools from the *AWN* Top 20. Sophomore Jason Kelber finished second at 126. Heavyweight Sonny Manley placed fourth. At the Northern Iowa Open, freshman Corey

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Colson won the 167-pound title.

Olson and Manley provided the winning edge against Iowa State at 190 and heavyweight, respectively. After eight matches ISU led, 14-13, before back-to-back wins put a stop to the Cyclones' 36-dual winning streak over Nebraska.

"The win over Iowa State reaffirms to our guys already on the team that we have a legitimate chance to contend for the NCAA title in the next couple of years," said Neumann. "It also helps in recruiting because instead of saying we're going to beat these schools, now we can say we have beaten them."...

Back to football, recruiting newsletters have been coming out with their high school All-American teams for last fall, and early indications are that, as expected, the Huskers are enjoying early success.

One way to gauge "success" is to count how many of these phenoms are interested in Nebraska. The newsletters faithfully list schools by each player's

name, but this is an inexact science at best. Sometimes it indicates the youngster is definitely going to visit the Husker campus; sometimes it means the lad is simply interested in Nebraska; sometimes the interest is more by the Huskers than by the prospect. Overall, it's iffy.

Still, it's a decent barometer of Nebraska's appeal.

Tom Lemming's *Prep Football Report* lists 190 athletes on its all-region and All-American teams, and 42 of those stars allegedly have the warm fuzzies for Nebraska. Self-proclaimed recruiting "guru" Max Emfinger features all-region teams that include 585 players, and 111 of them have Big Red listed by their name. Finally, *G&W Recruiting Report* has annointed 132 all-region players and NU is in the hunt for 28.

It's just another sign that the Huskers are in good shape for Feb. 8 signing. Add to that the stellar 1987 class and the fact that 1988's sleeper recruits are wide

awake and more talented than recruiting "experts" gave them credit for, Nebraska could be in for a very healthy stretch through the early 1990s...

As far as the Orange Bowl goes, losing to Miami in convincing fashion was tolerable but seeing Jimmy Johnson's Hurricanes launch a pass into the end zone with less than a minute to play in their 23-3 victory was a disappointing dose of reality: even major-college coaches can have bush league class.

Johnson's post-game comment was that Miami quarterbacks are instructed to always audible at the line for a quick pass when they see a blitz coming. "It's our system," Johnson said. "If people don't like us throwing, then they shouldn't blitz."...

With Broderick Thomas and Jake Young making All-America this year, it marked the 10th consecutive season in which the Cornhuskers have had at least one player named to a prestigious post-season team. ■

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# STATISTICS

## STATISTICAL LEADERS

(Bowl results not included in totals)

### RUSHING

	Texas A&M	Utah St.	UCLA	Arizona St.	UNLV	Kansas	Oklahoma St.	Kansas St.	Missouri	Iowa St.	Colorado	Oklahoma	Bowl	Total
Clark	20-80-1-4.0	12-90-1-7.5	12-46-0-3.8	22-122-1-5.5	14-79-3-5.6	10-64-0-6.4	27-256-3-9.5	20-225-1-11.3	23-57-0-2.5	20-146-1-7.3	28-165-1-5.9	24-167-0-6.9	14-36-0-2.6	232-1497-12-6.5
Taylor	18-34-0-1.9	9-74-2-8.2	14-95-1-6.8	17-116-1-6.8	11-67-0-6.1	8-43-2-5.4	11-140-3-12.7	11-34-0-3.1	13-(38)-0-(2.9)	12-154-3-12.8	12-40-0-3.3	21-67-1-3.2	17-12-0-7	157-826-13-5.3
Carpenter	3-4-0-1.3	4-30-0-7.5	5-47-0-9.4	7-26-0-3.7	5-59-1-11.8	2-33-1-16.5	7-76-0-10.8	6-18-0-3.0	12-96-1-8.0	6-40-0-6.7	10-44-0-4.4	5-25-0-5.0	5-15-0-3.0	72-498-3-6.9
Knox		5-50-0-10.0	3-8-0-2.7	4-26-0-6.5	8-57-0-7.1	6-120-1-20.0	10-53-0-5.3	19-108-4-5.7	2-4-1-2.0	10-44-0-4.4	3-18-0-6.0	2-2-0-1.0		72-490-6-6.8
Rodgers	10-65-0-6.5	7-19-1-2.7	2-12-0-6.0	13-113-1-8.7	11-50-1-4.5									43-259-3-6.0
Joseph		3-34-1-11.3		2-15-1-7.5	1-22-0-22.0	12-77-1-6.4		2-23-0-11.5		4-44-0-11.0				24-215-3-9.0
Flowers		3-18-0-6.0		2-14-0-7.0	3-37-0-12.3	13-80-1-6.1		8-41-0-5.1		3-12-1-4.0				32-202-2-6.3
Gdowski		6-40-1-6.7		1-(2)-0-(2.0)	1-19-0-19.0	5-42-0-8.4				4-56-1-14.0			1-4-0-4.0	17-155-2-9.1
Lewis		4-15-0-3.8	1-9-0-9.0	2-1-0-0.5	3-16-0-5.3	10-50-1-5.0	2-5-0-2.5	3-18-0-6.0		4-18-0-4.5				29-132-1-4.6
Bell	1-(5)-0-(5.0)				1-(4)-0-(4.0)	4-33-0-8.3	1-38-0-38.0			4-40-0-10.0	2-11-0-5.5	1-3-0-3.0	1-13-0-13.0	14-116-0-8.3

(Legend: Attempts-Yards-TDs-Average)

### PASSING

	Texas A&M	Utah St.	UCLA	Arizona St.	UNLV	Kansas	Oklahoma St.	Kansas St.	Missouri	Iowa St.	Colorado	Oklahoma	Bowl	Total
Taylor	22-11-0-125-1	10-7-0-143-1	29-14-3-125-2	10-3-1-29-1	10-6-0-56-0	9-7-0-78-1	11-6-1-92-2	11-6-0-129-1	9-3-0-153-1	9-5-0-71-1	9-2-0-18-0	12-2-2-48-0	21-8-2-55-0	151-72-7-1067-11
Gdowski		3-2-0-19-1				3-2-0-31-0		1-1-0-14-0		1-0-0-0-0			1-0-1-0-0	8-5-0-64-1
Joseph		1-1-0-7-0				2-1-1-9-0		1-0-1-0-0						4-2-2-16-0

(Legend: Attempts-Completions-Interceptions-Yards-TDs)

### RECEIVING

	Texas A&M	Utah St.	UCLA	Arizona St.	UNLV	Kansas	Oklahoma St.	Kansas St.	Missouri	Iowa St.	Colorado	Oklahoma	Bowl	Total
Gregory	4-44-0	1-13-0	5-57-1	3-29-1	2-21-0	1-11-0	2-32-0		1-12-0	1-20-0				20-239-2
Millikan	2-33-1	1-8-0	2-9-1			3-57-1	3-52-2	2-52-0	1-82-1	1-6-1	1-9-0		1-5-0	16-308-7
Brinson	1-8-0	1-34-0	3-15-0		3-28-0		1-8-0	2-55-1						11-148-1
Bell	1-9-0	3-77-1	1-17-0			2-26-0						2-48-0	2-39-0	9-177-1
Turner	2-23-0		1-5-0		1-7-0	1-9-0		1-19-0	1-59-0	1-28-0			1-6-0	8-150-0

(Legend: Catches-Yards-TDs)

### TACKLES — LINEMEN

	Texas A&M	Utah St.	UCLA	Arizona St.	UNLV	Kansas	Oklahoma St.	Kansas St.	Missouri	Iowa St.	Colorado	Oklahoma	Bowl	Total
Pete		2-0-2; 1-8	5-0-5; 0-0	3-2-5; 1-12	2-1-3; 0-0	1-2-3; 0-0	3-2-5; 0-0		5-5-10; 2-11	2-1-3; 1-6	5-5-10; 1-2	5-4-9; 1-5	2-1-3; 1-3	33-22-55; 7-44
Griffin	3-1-4; 0-0	2-1-3; 1-1	3-2-5; 0-0	4-1-5; 1-1	3-1-4; 0-0	1-1-2; 0-0	5-1-6; 2-11	1-0-1; 0-0	4-2-6; 1-6	0-2-0; 0-0	3-0-3; 0-0	4-2-6; 2-2	4-0-4; 0-0	33-14-47; 7-21
Wells	0-1-1; 0-0	0-1-1; 0-0	0-1-1; 0-0	1-1-2; 1-4	1-1-2; 0-0	0-3-3; 1-4	3-2-5; 0-0	1-2-3; 1-8	5-2-7; 0-0	1-2-3; 1-7	4-2-6; 0-0	3-1-4; 3-16	2-1-3; 0-0	19-19-38; 7-39
Brungardt	1-1-2; 1-7	1-1-2; 0-0	6-0-6; 0-0	1-1-2; 0-0		1-1-2; 1-1				1-2-3; 1-4				11-6-17; 3-12
Murray	3-1-4; 1-1	2-2-4; 0-0		0-1-1; 0-0		0-1-1; 0-0				0-1-1; 0-0				5-6-11; 1-1
Sims			0-2-2; 0-0		1-0-1; 1-8	0-1-1; 0-0		0-1-1; 0-0		2-1-3; 1-3		1-0-1; 0-0	1-0-1; 0-0	3-6-9; 2-11
Monarrez		0-1-1; 0-0	0-1-1; 0-0		1-0-1; 0-0	0-2-2; 0-0				0-3-3; 0-0				1-7-8; 0-0

(Legend: Unassisted tackles-Assisted tackles-Total Tackles; Tackles for loss-Yards lost)

### TACKLES — LINEBACKERS

	Texas A&M	Utah St.	UCLA	Arizona St.	UNLV	Kansas	Oklahoma St.	Kansas St.	Missouri	Iowa St.	Colorado	Oklahoma	Bowl	Total
Thomas	6-8-14; 1-1	5-2-7; 3-23	8-3-11; 1-4	5-5-10; 1-2	3-1-4; 1-14	2-6-8; 1-2	4-4-8; 0-0	1-2-3; 1-7	5-4-9; 1-9	5-2-7; 2-12	4-5-9; 1-19	5-3-8; 4-18	3-2-5; 1-8	53-45-98; 17-111
Etienne	6-5-11; 1-1	3-1-4; 0-0	8-1-9; 0-0	5-2-7; 0-0		3-3-6; 0-0	6-2-8; 1-4	1-3-4; 1-5	3-3-6; 1-4	5-5-10; 1-1	6-2-8; 0-0	6-0-6; 3-20	7-5-12; 0-0	52-27-79; 8-35
Caliendo		1-0-1; 0-0		1-1-2; 0-0	3-0-3; 0-0	4-1-5; 0-0	3-5-8; 0-0	4-0-4; 0-0	10-2-12; 1-1	1-4-5; 0-0	3-5-8; 0-0	4-1-5; 0-0	0-1-1; 0-0	34-19-53; 1-1
Mills	4-2-6; 0-0	0-1-1; 0-0	1-1-2; 1-5	2-1-3; 1-2	1-1-2; 0-0	3-4-7; 1-4	2-1-3; 0-0	3-2-5; 0-0	2-3-5; 0-0	1-4-5; 1-2	3-3-6; 0-0	2-3-5; 1-3	1-1-2; 0-0	24-26-50; 5-16
Tyrance	2-2-4; 0-0	4-1-5; 0-0	6-2-8; 0-0	0-3-3; 0-0	2-0-2; 0-0	0-2-2; 1-4	2-2-4; 0-0	3-1-4; 0-0		0-3-3; 0-0		1-0-1; 0-0		20-16-36; 1-4
Jobman	3-0-3; 0-0	2-1-3; 0-0	3-1-4; 0-0	1-2-3; 0-0	1-2-3; 0-0	1-1-2; 0-0	1-3-4; 0-0	1-2-3; 0-0		2-2-4; 0-0			1-0-1; 0-0	15-14-29; 0-0
Marco	1-2-3; 0-0		3-2-5; 0-0	2-0-2; 1-1	1-2-3; 0-0	1-2-3; 0-0	1-1-2; 0-0	1-0-1; 1-8	2-1-3; 0-0	1-1-2; 0-0	1-1-2; 0-0			14-12-26; 2-9
Croel	2-0-2; 0-0	2-3-5; 1-6		3-0-3; 0-0	1-0-1; 0-0	2-3-5; 0-0	1-0-1; 0-0	1-0-1; 0-0	1-0-1; 0-0	2-1-3; 1-7			2-1-3; 0-0	15-7-22; 2-13
Hagge		1-1-2; 0-0		4-0-4; 0-0	1-2-3; 0-0	3-0-3; 0-0	1-0-1; 0-0			1-1-2; 0-0				11-4-15; 0-0

(Legend: Unassisted tackles-Assisted tackles-Total tackles; Tackles for loss-Yards lost)

### TACKLES — BACKS

	Texas A&M	Utah St.	UCLA	Arizona St.	UNLV	Kansas	Oklahoma St.	Kansas St.	Missouri	Iowa St.	Colorado	Oklahoma	Bowl	Total
Cooper	4-4-8; 0-0	5-2-7; 1-0	4-2-6; 0-0	3-2-5; 1-0	3-2-5; 0-0	2-0-2; 0-0	6-4-10; 0-0	3-1-4; 1-1	3-1-4; 1-0	1-1-2; 0-0	0-2-2; 0-0	3-0-3; 0-0	4-0-4; 0-0	37-21-58; 4-1
Blazek	0-5-5; 0-0	1-1-2; 0-1	4-2-6; 0-1	4-2-6; 0-0	1-1-2; 0-0	0-0-0; 1-0	1-1-2; 0-1	2-2-4; 0-0	1-1-2; 0-0	0-1-1; 0-0	5-5-10; 0-0		5-0-5; 1-0	19-21-40; 4-3
Jackson	1-1-2; 1-1	1-1-2; 0-0	2-3-5; 1-0	3-1-4; 0-2		2-0-2; 0-0	5-1-6; 0-1	2-0-2; 1-0	3-1-4; 1-0	2-0-2; 0-0	2-1-3; 1-0	4-2-6; 0-0	4-1-5; 0-0	27-11-38; 5-4
Fryar	3-5-8; 0-1	2-0-2; 0-0	4-0-4; 0-0	1-0-1; 1-0			4-0-4; 1-1	1-0-1; 0-0	9-0-9; 0-0	0-0-0; 1-1	2-1-3; 1-0	1-1-2; 0-0	6-1-7; 1-2	27-7-34; 4-3
Hicks	2-1-3; 0-0		1-0-1; 0-0	4-0-4; 0-0	3-0-3; 1-0		4-1-5; 1-0		2-0-2; 0-0		2-2-4; 0-0	1-2-3; 1-1	2-0-2; 1-0	19-6-25; 3-1
Lewis		2-0-2; 2-0	2-1-3; 1-0	2-2-4; 0-0	1-1-2; 0-0	1-2-3; 1-1	0-1-1; 0-0	2-1-3; 0-0	2-0-2; 0-0				3-0-3; 2-1	12-8-20; 4-1
Sanders	1-0-1; 0-0	0-1-1; 0-0		1-0-1; 0-0	2-0-2; 0-0	1-3-4; 0-0	1-0-1; 0-0	2-3-5; 1-0	1-0-1; 0-0	1-1-2; 1-0				10-8-18; 2-0
Pickens	1-0-1; 0-0	1-1-2; 1-0		1-1-2; 0-0		2-2-4; 0-0		3-0-3; 0-1		1-1-2; 0-0				9-5-14; 1-1
Custard		1-0-1; 0-0	2-0-2; 0-0			1-0-0; 0-0				2-1-3; 0-0				6-1-7; 0-0

(Legend: Unassisted tackles-Assisted tackles-Total tackles; Pass breakups-Interceptions)



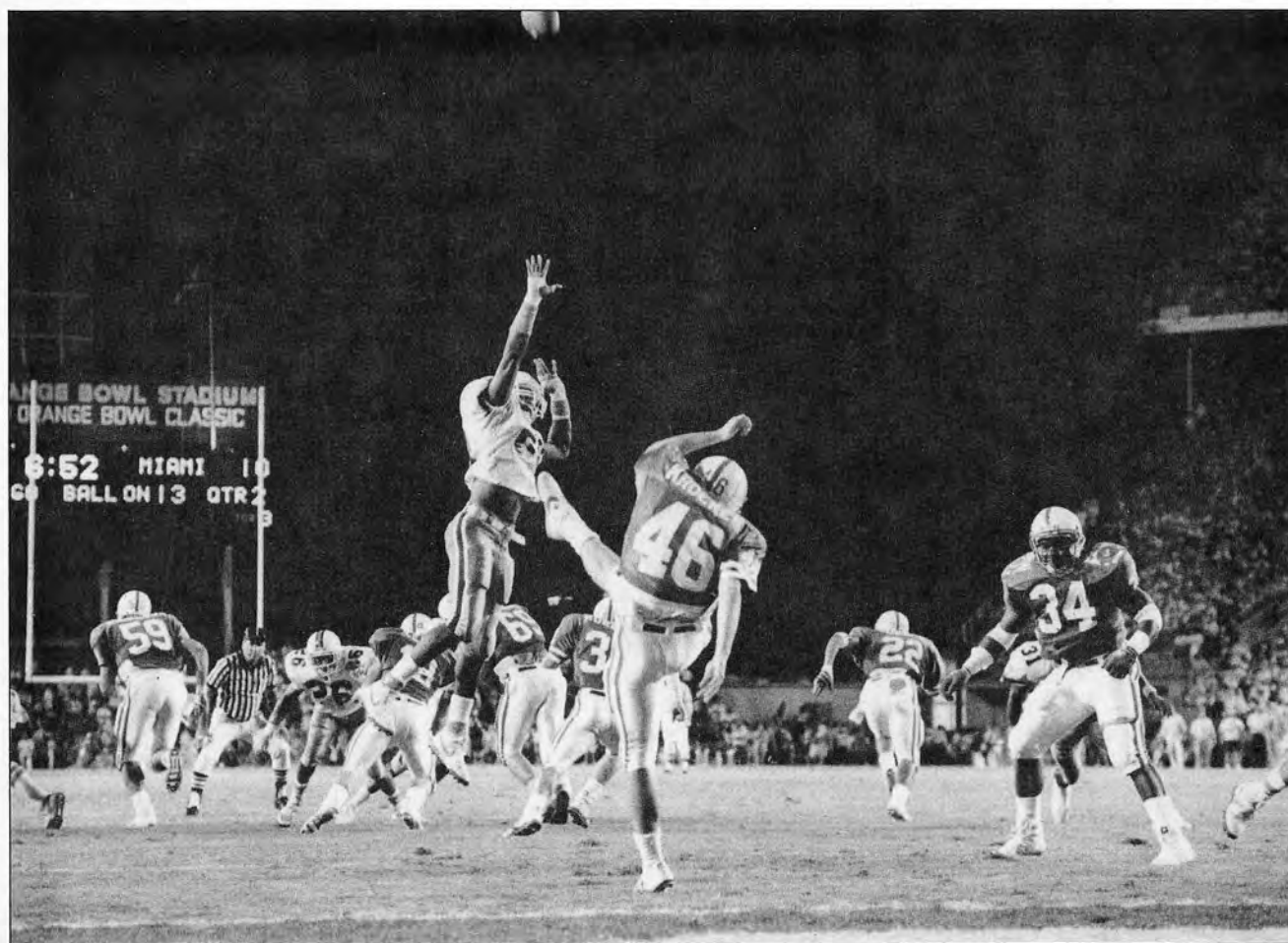
## TEAM STATISTICS

(Bowl results not included in totals)

	GAME		SEASON			GAME		SEASON	
	NU	MU	NU	OPP		NU	MU	NU	OPP
First downs	10	20	292	174	Total plays	60	76	901	743
First downs rushing	7	5	229	83	Net yards	135	354	5,735	3,153
First downs passing	2	13	49	68	Average gain per play	2.3	4.7	6.4	4.2
First downs penalty	1	2	14	23	Fumbles-lost	0-0	1-0	25-12	28-9
Rushing attempts	38	28	738	461	Penalties-yards	5-45	7-60	82-702	67-530
Yards gained rushing	124	91	4,856	1,939	Interceptions-yards	3-31	3-0	17-328	9-77
Yards lost rushing	44	22	268	404	Punts	9	4	44	80
Net yards rushing	80	69	4,588	1,535	Punt average	37.2	39.5	40.6	38.9
Passing attempts	22	48	163	282	Kickoff returns-yards	7-117	2-39	41-819	59-949
Passes completed	8	23	79	123	Punt returns-yards	0-0	4-47	41-463	20-178
Passes intercepted	3	3	9	16	Possession time	29:44	30:16	32:46	27:14
Net yards passing	55	285	1,147	1,618	3rd down conversions	1-14	8-18	73-153	44-169

## FINAL BIG EIGHT CONFERENCE STANDINGS

Team	CONFERENCE GAMES						ALL GAMES					
	Win	Loss	Tie	Pct.	PF	PA	Win	Loss	Tie	Pct.	PF	PA
Nebraska	7	0		1.000	265	92	11	2		.856	477	205
Oklahoma	6	1		.857	235	101	9	3		.750	332	160
Oklahoma State	5	2		.714	317	219	10	2		.833	584	341
Colorado	4	3		.571	181	108	8	4		.667	322	196
Iowa State	3	4		.429	136	183	5	6		.455	195	258
Missouri	2	5		.286	164	195	3	7	1	.318	234	330
Kansas	1	6		.143	122	319	1	10		.091	189	496
Kansas State	0	7		.000	108	311	0	11		.000	171	448





Mark Owens

# O-K-L-A-H-Ouch!

## NCAA PROBATION AT OU AND OSU STUNS BIG EIGHT FOOTBALL.

Nebraska won't be on television at least twice in 1988; the missing TV dates are unmistakably Oklahoma and Oklahoma State, two games the Cornhuskers had every right to expect on the tube because of OSU's Barry Sanders, returning Heisman Trophy winner, and OU's tradition.

Those weren't unfounded expectations. Nebraska-OSU has been broadcast four of the past five years, and the Pokes are apparently bowl-material again (so to speak) in '89. Oklahoma, of course, has missed live TV coverage with Nebraska only three times since 1970, twice because the Sooners were on probation and TV was impossible.

But NCAA sanctions inflicted on OU and OSU have altered expectations of Nebraska football in the coming years. Those expectations could be critical.

Coach Tom Osborne expressed concern last fall about high expectations when his highly favored Huskers edged Missouri, 28-16, and were booed in Lincoln by Nebraska fans. Osborne saw on-the-field results of extreme expectations — both warranted and warped — against Utah State in 1987 when he said after a ho-hum effort, "Our players saw in the media every day how we were supposed to slaughter those people (Utah State), and I think they started believing it."

So, what can be expected of Big Eight football in 1989?

It's cut-and-dried when it comes to TV.

Losing OU and OSU pushes Nebraska in 1989 to the brink of being the least attractive TV team — through no fault of its own — since Bob Devaney and Tom Osborne came here. If the Huskers get a TV date with any of their non-conference foes (Northern Illinois, Utah, Minnesota and Oregon State), it will defy broadcast logic. All had losing records in 1987 except 7-4 Northern Illinois, NU's season-opener. None have glamorous reputations. Utah

returns a talented quarterback but loses five of its six best receivers. A Gopher-Husker game would have strong Northern Plains appeal but little attraction for the coasts. That leaves only five available games, which logically fall in this order of TV appeal: Colorado, Missouri, Iowa State, Kansas and Kansas State. Realistically, which of those has a 50-50 chance of being broadcast on cable or regional network? Perhaps two if reality is stretched to the limit. What about a national network matchup? Nebraska can live up to its end of the Nielsen-appeal bargain, but can Colorado? The Buffs and Huskers last enjoyed a national network broadcast in 1971.

Depending on improvement at Missouri and Iowa State plus self-preservation at Oklahoma State, Nebraska stands a decent chance of being 8-0 when it travels to Boulder on Nov. 4, when the young-but-talented Buffs should likewise have a good record and shot at the Orange Bowl. It may seem strange, but Nebraska's 1989 regular-season TV exposure conceivably hinges on one game.

Sure, there's hope. Cable or network higher-ups could broadcast Nebraska out of desperation. It's happened before. Back in '83, ABC-TV showed Nebraska-Kansas regionally even though the Jayhawks were 3-5-1 and on a three-game skid heading into Lincoln. In 1986, 3-4 KU and top-ranked Oklahoma also got a regional telecast from ABC officials, who maintained vehemently that OU's 64-3 rout was the best available matchup in America that day.

In those cases, however, the real appeal was one-sided: both Big Reds were ranked No. 1 and blessed with star players.

NU's vanilla non-conference schedule is ideal for breaking in new quarterbacks, and Steve Taylor's replacement (probably from the trio of Gerry Gdowski, Mike Grant and Mickey

Joseph) will likely benefit from the mild indoctrination. But TV exposure looks to suffer. After averaging five telecasts per regular season in the 1980s, the Huskers will be hard to find on the dial.

The disappointment is undeniable. *Huskers Illustrated* subscribers like Harold Bergt of Fairmont, Minn., often write to convey their Big Red loyalty, and many of their letters end the same way Bergt's did: "We look forward to seeing every game on TV."

For non-ticket-holders, because of sanctions against OU and OSU, there won't be much to look forward to in 1989.

But what about on-the-field success?

The NCAA says OU and OSU can't go to a bowl or play on TV, but so far there's been no rule passed that says those Oklahomans still can't beat Nebraska.

In Norman, beating the Huskers will take on even greater significance, heightened further should the Sooner program mysteriously falter, which does not seem likely with 17 starters returning. OU's public stance has been to make the best of a bad situation, accept the fact that a 9-2 or 8-3 season may be around the corner, but also assure its opponents that the piper will soon return and demand a hefty payment. A crafty motivator, Barry Switzer makes no bones that he is searching for a rallying point, something to not only improve the sagging team morale of 1988 but also take Sooner spirits even higher than normal during the coming jail term.

OU did just that in 1974-75 when it won consecutive national titles while on probation. (But the Sooners were not handcuffed by scholarship limits and had 45 available to give.) Oklahoma has won four of its six national championships while on probation and never lost to Nebraska in a sanctioned season.

Limited to just 18 scholarships this



spring and next, OU plans to sign the full amount and redshirt everyone in 1989.

Oklahoma State is harder to figure on-the-field next year. Sanders returns along with Mike Gundy, surely the early choice for all-conference quarterback. Even without Hart Lee Dykes, he may be All-American material. Plus, OSU's defense is bound to improve: they were No. 97 in Division I-A last fall. But the Cowboys do not have the resources of an Oklahoma, and their 1977 run-in with the NCAA resulted in a two-year tumble out of respectability.

OSU officials are generally pleased with their "light" penalty (relative, that is, to the blood-letting they had feared). So, morale is perhaps higher in Stillwater than Norman, where wishbone incompetence has generated severe criticism from Sooner idealists and serious head-scratching from moderates (including Switzer).

Mainly, O-State has the wonderful

Barry Sanders. With Sanders, Kansas State would be bowl material. With Sanders, last year's Husker JV team would have deserved Top 20 votes. So, it's fair to expect OSU to continue winning, near-term, but the long-term for Pat Jones and team can reasonably only point downward.

That brings up recruiting. What effect will the NCAA probation have on Oklahoma and Oklahoma State?

Switzer's assessment of the NCAA damage was that OU must accurately evaluate the prospects for its miniature 1989 and 1990 recruiting classes (limited to 18 grants per year). And he has said that it is easier to evaluate athletes in Oklahoma and Texas than it is players from the coasts. Logically, OU will succeed most often this spring by focusing its limited resources (only seven assistants can recruit instead of eight, and their on-campus, paid visits have been cut from 85 to 50) on its home state and its adopted state, Texas.

That theory applies to OSU as well.

This, in fact, is where Oklahoma has had its greatest success anyway. When the Sooners made recruiting goofs in the early '80s by signing schoolboys who had great talent but questionable character, it was during forays into California, Arizona and Florida. By concentrating on its traditional recruiting grounds, the Sooners returned to power in the mid-1980s.

Evidently unaware of this, recruiters from across the country have converged this season on Oklahoma (admittedly yielding a good senior class) in unprecedented numbers snooping for schoolboy talent. Coaches from the Southeastern Conference have even made rare appearances. Their logic seems to be that OU and OSU have been vulnerable since last summer simply because of probation speculation. However, it would seem to make more sense that a prospect from the coast would be soured by probation problems.

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more than a youngster with regional loyalties. Where the Sooners and Cowboys, indeed, might lose a prospect or two is in the oddball corners of their recruiting maps.

If anything, the recruiting efforts by OU and OSU should reach a fevered pitch in Oklahoma and Texas. Switzer has said there are 10 Division I-A caliber players in Oklahoma this year, and "we're going to get nine of them." Switzer's confidence does not bode well for spunky but less-resourceful Oklahoma State.

By this writing, OU has already stopped the probationary bleeding, while OSU could be turning ever more pale for months to come. Oklahoma's athletic budget is \$14 million; OSU's is barely \$10 million. The Sooners can absorb their revenue losses (estimated at close to \$1 million) by trimming fat; O-State apparently must cut muscle. Switzer should remain for years at OU; Pat Jones can't be blamed for jumping to greener pastures.

This adds up to relative trouble in Stillwater, especially in light of the Big Eight's influx of young stallion coaches like Bob Stull at Missouri, Iowa State's Jim Walden plus new mentors at Kansas and Kansas State. Keeping up with Tom Osborne, Switzer and Colorado's Bill McCartney will be increasingly more difficult for OSU.

On the field, the Oklahomans can still technically win the Big Eight championship. The conference has yet to impose additional sanctions and is not likely to do so. Also, OU is still in a position to conceivably win the national title because the rating services — except for UPI's coaches poll — do not discriminate against NCAA convicts.

Oklahoma returns enough talent next fall to be a force, possibly a narrow preseason favorite to win the Big Eight because some voters will be obsessed with Nebraska's loss of Taylor, Broderick Thomas, LeRoy Etienne and other all-stars.

The safest approach by any Big Eight school to OU's and OSU's NCAA predicament would appear to be to expect nothing short of the Okies' best shot — think of them as innocent until proven guilty of being talentless. The drop-off, if any, will likely be seen in

some form of recruiting slip this year with subsequent on-the-field question marks in a few years.

What about the Orange Bowl? Is Nebraska destined for three straight post-season clashes with powerful Miami on its home field? Not necessarily. The Huskers must take care of business first, which means winning the Big Eight. Should OU or Oklahoma State take the league title, the Orange Bowl is not obliged to invite the next highest league team that doesn't wear prison stripes. A hypothesis: a 10-1 Nebraska

## **The Huskers have enough talent on campus to be more than deserving of a Top 10 ranking.**

could finish as Big Eight runner-up and still get an Orange Bowl bid because of the Top 10 ranking that any 10-1 Husker team would likely receive. The choice, however, still belongs to the Orange Bowl.

What will be the financial impact on Nebraska? The Husker Athletic Department stands to lose several hundred thousand dollars from the TV and bowl revenue they and all other Big Eight members stood to share from OU and OSU. That will translate into a slight budget crunch for Nebraska, while league members with smaller athletic budgets will feel a bigger percentage loss.

Where Oklahoma and Oklahoma State would appear to absorb the hardest blows is in image. Switzer has acknowledged the embarrassment he feels about the penalty. OSU is likewise tarnished. Poke recruiters had been eagerly promoting OSU as the All-American Tailback Factory. Even though both schools can minimize the probations to prospects (OU insists its incoming freshmen can still see action in 47 games throughout their careers instead of 48), some parents and schoolboys will naturally turn a deaf ear to the Sooners and Cowboys.

Nebraska's situation following the blood-letting is as solid as it would have been had no penalties been assessed. The Huskers are coming off yet another

successful season despite the Orange Bowl loss. Osborne's image as a coaching giant has been magnified with the retirement of one of his few remaining peers, former Georgia boss Vince Dooley. Osborne's image as a class act was sharply contrasted as he congratulated victorious Jimmy Johnson, who was admonished by NBC-TV announcers for throwing to the end zone late in what was without question a rout. Recruiting reports this season have mostly been upbeat, if not down-right gleeful. As any veteran Husker-watcher knows and the national media seem to forget, Nebraska has plenty of unknown talent on campus, enough to hint that NU is more than deserving of a preseason Top 10 ranking despite the loss of some great seniors. A shoot-from-the-hip guess would be that the Huskers will go into 1989 ranked anywhere from seventh to fifth, perhaps higher.

Osborne's approach has always been to win 'em one game at a time and constantly strive for improvement, which will be an even better battle cry next fall when Husker football will be best served by concentrating on its own fortunes instead of worrying too much about OU and OSU.

No doubt, it is tempting to celebrate this winter the anticipated victories of next fall, but let's look at the best-case and worst-case scenarios. Possibly, Oklahoma State will drown in self-pity and the Sooners will come groveling to Lincoln next November with a measly 6-4 record and waving a white flag. Just as possible, the Cowboys might ride Sanders' glorious talent and whip Nebraska followed by a brutal attack by fire-breathing Sooners who are on a national title rampage.

Both cases are possible but highly unlikely.

It's safer and more realistic to expect that Oklahoma State and Oklahoma will regroup and field teams that fall into a happy medium for 1989. Both should still be good. No team in the Big Eight — not OU, not OSU, not Colorado, and not even Nebraska — seems to have the kind of dominating squad that will be mentioned often in the national championship race. Of course, Nebraska and Oklahoma almost always have that potential; 1989 will be no exception. ■



Although Nebraska's football team had some problems with players breaking curfew restrictions while in Miami at the Orange Bowl, junior linebacker Chris Caliendo may have had the biggest hassle.

Two players were sent home and 10 others were suspended for violations, but Caliendo was consistently threatened for even more serious sanctions.

The night before the game, Caliendo was spotted doing a Lincoln TV interview an hour after bedcheck and three days after the Cornhuskers had been cut off from the media.

It was Caliendo all right, but not Chris. His twin brother Cary, a starting linebacker at Northern Illinois, was in town — doing the interview. "They look a lot more alike than most twins," said Nebraska associate sports information director Tom Simons.

**Broderick Thomas**, senior outside linebacker, has been hammered on the question of which pro football team he'd like to play for. An All-American who has been designated as a sure top five pick in next spring's NFL draft, Thomas has been quoted as saying he'd like to play for the Miami Dolphins, the Los Angeles Raiders, the Kansas City Chiefs, the Los Angeles Rams, the Houston Oilers and Miami Dolphins plus a host of others. What he said lately is that he would love to play pro football and, if possible, in a warm climate. Otherwise, he wasn't going to be too choosy.

**The Cornhuskers** were misidentified by the *Miami Herald* at least three times. One story reported how Joe Croker was the main speaker for Nebraska at a Fellowship of Christian Athletes breakfast. They meant senior punter John Kroeker. There was also a John Davis, supposedly a center with Nebraska in 1986, and a Jim Davis, a defensive back in 1979, among the former Cornhuskers cited. Nobody seemed to know either Davis.

**Former NU All-American Neil Smith** of the Kansas City Chiefs and former NU defensive tackle Lee Jones were among the former Cornhuskers in attendance at this year's Orange Bowl game.

**NU coach Tom Osborne** had time to play catch with his son, Mike, in Lin-



Tom Osborne

coln before the Orange Bowl. Mike is a graduate student at Emory University in Atlanta.

**Defensive Backs Coach George Darlington** said he was the driver for Aaron Emanuel when the (then) high school recruit was flying to Lincoln on a recruiting trip. Emanuel told *Sports Illustrated* that he was driven in a chauffeured white limousine, and after his recruiting visit to Lincoln, he had dinner with (then) Gov. Bob Kerrey and (then) girlfriend Debra Winger. According to NU recruiting coordinator Dave Gillespie and former NU recruiting coordinator Steve Pederson, Emanuel ate at a breakfast that Kerrey attended, but there was no Winger.

Darlington said that this year, while in California recruiting, he was jolted awake by a minor earthquake. Osborne said he had a similar experience in 1975.

**Cartier Walker**, senior defensive back, managed to pick up some extra money while on the Orange Bowl trip. Walker, native of Atlantic City, N.J., said he kept the dice rolling for 45 minutes during NU's day off, when he flew to the Bahamas. "I learned a little about craps when I grew up in Atlantic City," said Walker.

**Nebraska may take a look at** offensive changes after the Orange Bowl, Osborne said. "We're willing to change, but we're not going to throw the baby out with the bath water," he said.

**NU Steve Taylor** said he wouldn't mind playing in the CFL if nothing worked out in the NFL. He said he definitely wanted to play quarterback in the pros. "I see how Ken Clark gets hit, and I'm an east-west runner — not north-south," he said.

**Dana Brinson** got an extended visit home with his mother when the Cornhuskers were in Miami. Brinson, who lived with his grandparents and attended Valdosta (Ga.) High School, spends most of his summers and vacation time with his mother in Miami. "I guess that made me the tour guide," he said.

**Cornhuskers Willie Griffin**, **Kent Wells** and **Gregg Barrios** were held out of practices for the Orange Bowl because of a mixup with the NCAA drug testing procedure. First, the equipment was late in arriving in Miami. Second, Wells had trouble completing the test, and Griffin (who planned to ride with Wells to practice) had to wait while Wells drank water and orange juice. Barrios' sample was too acidic for the test to work, and he had to wait for his blood and body fluids to become more alkaline for the test to reflect accurate results.

Osborne was upset with the entire delay and the fact the NCAA had already completed tests two weeks before. "I think I wouldn't have passed the test if they tested me today," he said. "I was a little acidic myself." ■



# JUCO JUNGLE

IT CAN BE DANGEROUS RECRUITING TERRITORY, BUT THE JC RANKS HAVE BEEN GOOD TO NEBRASKA FOOTBALL.



The number has never been great, but the impact left by junior colleges on Nebraska has been tremendous.

According to records, only 11 junior college players have transferred to Nebraska in the last 10 years.

But the importance of those players and their subsequent success at Nebraska is almost unbelievable.

Just one junior college player, probably the most famous junior college transfer ever, could have made Nebraska a success in junior college recruiting.

Mike Rozier, the most honored Nebraska back ever, attended Coffeyville Junior College in Coffeyville, Kan., for one year and his three years at Nebraska were the best ever by a running back.

Rozier originally signed a national letter-of-intent with Nebraska in the early spring of 1980. But his high school grades were not good enough to qualify for enrollment at Nebraska.

At Coffeyville, the recruit from Camden, N.J., rushed for 1,100 yards, despite missing two games.

By the time he finished his career at Nebraska, Rozier had the Heisman Trophy and a host of Nebraska and NCAA records for rushing, scoring and yards-per-carry. He was a million-dollar draft pick in the USFL and later signed a multi-million dollar contract with the Houston Oilers. Rozier was named to

**Free market:** After Bryan Carpenter went juco in 1986, he was fair game and had to be signed again.



the All-Pro team this year.

But Rozier's contact with Nebraska was the key.

An obscure high school standout, Rozier originally signed a letter-of-intent at Coffeyville JC with Coach Dick Foster.

Later, Nebraska discovered Rozier while looking at another recruit and offered Rozier a scholarship.

A mixup in high school grade transcripts changed Rozier's route through Lincoln, though. By July of 1981, Rozier was headed back to Coffeyville.

"Mike Rozier was one of those guys who at this time would probably have gone to a Division I college and sat out while he became eligible," Foster said. "But back then, we had recruited him and Nebraska had recruited him. When he had to come to junior college, I called Coach Tom Osborne at Nebraska and said we'd do our best to help Mike progress and get his grades in order.

"After Mike finished his first year here, we spent some time talking about colleges and he was still interested in Nebraska," said Foster. "Of course, they were still interested in him, too.

"Pittsburgh tried to jump into the picture, but there was no way I was going to cooperate with them at that point because he had made up his mind."

A year earlier, another Coffeyville standout, Ron Springs, ended up at Ohio State under a similar arrangement.

"There's really nothing I can do about where a kid goes to college," said Foster. "There is no written or unwritten agreement, just loyalty and the cooperation I can give."

At the time, in 1981, when Rozier was eligible to go to college, the hookup with Nebraska was inevitable.

Former Coffeyville Athletic Director Jack McNickle said at the time, "If Nebraska wants him, they'll get him. When someone helps us get a player, the coaches don't let other people recruit him."

On the same note, Rozier said he was grateful for the year at Coffeyville. "I appreciated going to junior college instead of the university right away," he said. "I learned a lot about college and more about football. And I know I played more than I could have at Nebraska as a freshman." But Rozier's

**Mike Rozier (30) played juco ball before winning the Heisman.**



story is a rare one, and the scenario is just as rare across the country, Foster said.

"A lot of people think there are all kinds of agreements between major colleges and junior colleges, and that's just not the case," he said.

"The difference between the reality and the perception is the same as the misunderstanding about how junior colleges are getting rich because of Proposition 48."

Proposition 48, now known as bylaw 5-1-j, requires that each prospective scholarship athlete meet minimum requirements for academic standards such as scores on ACT and SAT tests and a core curriculum of studies in high school.

When the rule was first passed five years ago, predictions were made that the large number of top athletes who did not qualify for colleges under the new academic standards would flock to junior colleges to gain eligibility.

"Instead of getting rich, the junior colleges got ripped," Foster said. "There are so many more players going to major colleges and sitting out in a redshirt year or in an academic probation year that our talent pool is actually smaller."

As for the "agreements" between junior colleges and large colleges, such as Nebraska and Coffeyville, only the Rozier story comes close, Foster said.

"Very few players are placed in junior colleges the way they once were," he said.

"Nebraska will go get a kid if they want him because they don't want to risk losing him to somebody else."

Coffeyville does have Tracy Scroggins, who was going to sign with Oklahoma if he had qualified academically. And Foster said that Oklahoma coaches have indicated they would take Scroggins back when he meets eligibility requirements.

"I can control college recruiters a bit,



but these kids here have no real obligation to anybody," he said.

Nebraska's recent recruits from Coffeyville have made great contributions to the Cornhusker program, but they were recruited as though they were high school players.

Senior safety Tim Jackson and junior fullback Bryan Carpenter were signed by Nebraska in 1987, and cornerback Bruce Pickens was signed in 1988. Another junior college player, noseguard Junior Monarrez, was

recruited out of Cerritos Community College in California.

Nebraska was actually interested in Jackson when it signed Carpenter.

Jackson played against Nebraska when he was a freshman at Kansas State. But he left the school and transferred to Coffeyville and played there for two years. After he completed his junior college eligibility, Nebraska recruited him.

"They were looking at Tim (Jackson) when Bryan (Carpenter) said he'd like

to be put in touch with Nebraska again," Foster said. "So I called Coach Osborne and they were in need of a fullback, so they signed him, too."

Carpenter had actually signed with Nebraska a year earlier but left school after a couple of days and eventually came to Coffeyville.

Pickens was a standout in Coffeyville's victory over the Nebraska freshman team the next year, picking off three passes, and was recruited by the Cornhuskers. He was not recruited heavily out of high school.

Monarrez was not recruited out of high school and went to the Army for four years. He was discovered by Nebraska recruiters and signed with the Cornhuskers.

**"We will look at junior college players for specific positions, but we look long and hard at the prospects."**

**—Dave Gillespie**

Coffeyville has had Division I recruits go on to Alabama, Houston, Kansas, Oklahoma and Nebraska in the last three years.

"It has changed a bit in the recent past," Foster said. "Back when I was coaching at Fort Scott (Kan.), the Missouri coaches would send us bunches of kids to keep while they matured as students and players. There were other junior colleges that did that, too. But the recruiting game has changed and the rules have changed and schools just can't do that kind of thing anymore."

There are a number of reasons the old system of using junior colleges as farm teams isn't in great use.

Typically, solid teams don't like to build with junior college programs. There are too many risks in terms of getting a player for just two years.

Nebraska rarely recruits many junior college players for that reason alone.

The other recent junior college players who came to Nebraska were: cornerback Brian Davis; defensive back



Tim Jackson typifies the speed NU has gotten via Coffeyville (Kan.) Junior College.



Cleo Miller in 1983; punter Grant Campbell; kicker Scott Livingston in 1981; linebacker Kevin Biggers in 1980; and defensive linemen Henry Waechter and Mark Tuck in 1979.

"We will look at junior college players for specific positions, but we look long and hard at the prospects," Nebraska on-campus recruiting coordinator Dave Gillespie said.

Nebraska is currently looking at some junior college players this year as prospects.

Nebraska addresses two concerns when recruiting junior college players. First, making sure academic eligibility requirements are met in junior college when they weren't met after high school. Second, Husker coaches make sure the player can contribute immediately to the program.

Nebraska does get a head start on some junior college players because of the Nebraska freshman football schedule that includes up to four junior college opponents a year.

Pickens at Coffeyville and Waechter at Waldorf Junior College are two examples of JV-opponent converts.

The junior college recruiting system is used to a greater extent in basketball than it is in football, but the future looks good for football in junior colleges, Foster said.

"I think the new rules, like the one the Southeastern Conference adopted that they would not allow more than three kids to lay out a year, have started to even things up a bit," he said. "Also, when a college takes a Prop 48 player now, he loses a year of eligibility, where he can't play or practice, when he could be playing at a junior college, will help us more and more."

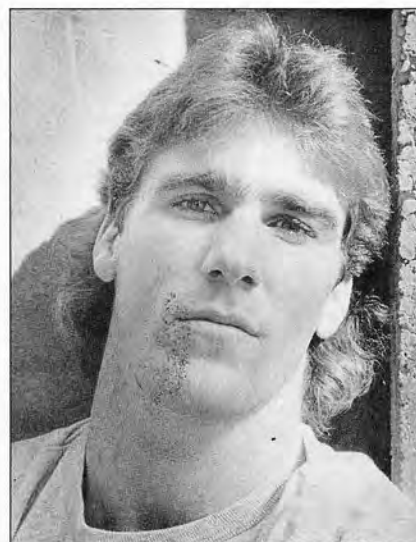
The junior college players who go to major colleges think the system works, too.

"I was happy I had a year or so to straighten things out with my studies and football and everything else," Carpenter said. "I enjoyed my junior college days, and I think the experience helped me help at Nebraska."

Nebraska will never recruit many junior college players, Osborne and other NU coaches have said. But they will continue to look for players who can help immediately. ■



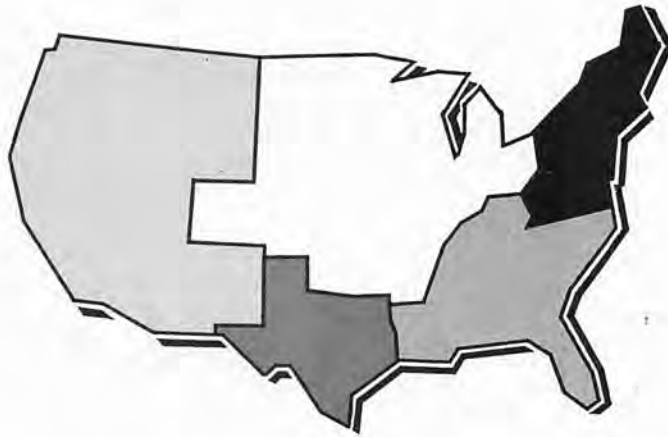
**Tom Osborne (above) prefers to limit juco recruiting to areas of immediate need. In four years, Brian Davis (right) went from juco ball to Nebraska to the Super Bowl.**





Pat Quinn

# Nebraska Gains Momentum



### Recruiting!

At this time of year that's the one word that sets it off. It lets high school athletes visit football programs they've dreamed about or are going to see for the first time, listen to heady praise and promises that often upset the natural balance of their environments and then, return home to hope the "right choice" is in the offing.

For the alumni, it creates an insatiable need to know what and who their alma maters are wooing. It even causes corporate magnates, who deal in six- and seven-figure sums each day, to follow the recruiting process as closely and as often as they do the Dow Jones. And, why not! The NCAA's Division I schools dole out about \$75,000,000 a year to keep almost 10,000 football grants and aids in existence.

For the coaches, who must orchestrate the recruiting process in an enthusiastic but very circumspect manner, it's an exhaustive essential that requires the patience of Job, the tact of Andrew Carnegie, the eloquence of William Jennings Bryan and, at times, the daring competitiveness of a George S. Patton.

Nebraska's recruiting fortunes, which have been the model of compassion and

efficiency for a number of years, are coordinated by Dave Gillespie, the on-campus recruiter, and Jack Pierce, the off-campus recruiter. Of course, the entire operation is overviewed by Coach Tom Osborne, who joins a fleet of assistant coaches, out in the field recruiting at this very moment.

These coaches recruit on the road throughout the week then rush back to Lincoln for the weekend to join with present Cornhusker players in entertaining recruits in for their official visits. When the prospects have left on Sunday, the coaches reconvene to discuss, refine and evaluate progress, plus set up their usually adjusted plans and start out on the road again.

Gillespie (who operates the home base clearinghouse and who moved his operation to Miami for the Orange Bowl) and the Husker staff are bombarded with well-meaning questions from the Husker faithful. One of the most reiterated questions is: What are the recruiting needs of Nebraska this year?

Gillespie softly answers this, saying, "I'd like to think our program is such that this 'need' factor isn't as great as some might think. We've felt we've had

good recruiting classes over the last several seasons but our basic philosophy is to recruit the best athletes we can.

"While I feel we're on solid ground at almost every position, I suppose if you had to single out a temporary importance it might be in the defensive secondary and offensive guard."

What about the junior college prospects?

"If there is a great player at any position, we'll look at him," Gillespie admits. "But, to be truly honest, we haven't been big in recruiting in this area."

Nationally, the Huskers are a prominent commodity. The NCAA allows a school to offer 25 grants per year with the total grants in existence never to exceed 95. These parity scholarship limits always force a hardship on the Huskers, who wisely save several grants each year to reward the worthy from their extensive walkon program.

"We have 25 scholarships available at this point," Gillespie says. "It's likely we'll offer 20 or 21 scholarships."

"Actually, we have to turn down some kids we'd like to take a chance on. It would be easy to say 'Let's go just one more,' but most often we don't and it



works out for the best.

"You've got to be up front and honest with the athlete and his family from the very beginning about the availability of a scholarship."

This problem also works in reverse. It's not uncommon for a coach, after establishing a solid rapport with the athlete and his family, to take personally the problem of having no scholarship available to offer or the athlete deciding to attend another school just as decision day (the second Wednesday in February) nears. On occasion, if the athlete's parents can afford it, the walk-on program offers a solution, but it's equally often an athlete and his family can't afford this option.

"I think it's best if the athlete and his family can make the decision," Gillespie says. "But, you can't escape it — it's difficult on both sides."

Annually, slightly more than 2,000 Division I football grants are tendered. Slightly less than one percent of these grants will be enrolled on the Lincoln campus each year. Much earlier in the recruiting season, and more by design than coincidence, five schoolboy prospects (each recruited by other major college football schools) cast their verbal lot with the Huskers.

They included Lincoln Northeast legacy David Noonan; Grand Island linebacker Mike Anderson; Lance Lundberg of Wasau; and Lance Larsen of Moorhead, Minn.

Why did these young men cast aside the glamour of trips to a variety of different schools? What are the reasons for the satisfaction in their decisions? Each came to the same conclusion and the manner in which they arrived at their decision varied only slightly.

Larsen, who is lean at 6-foot-6 and 235, covers the 40 in 4.9 and had offers — not just letters — from Notre Dame and Michigan, plus visits from Brigham Young, Florida and Iowa, to mention a few. He started his high school athletic career as a ninth-grader in hockey, a sport he had played since he was 6 years old at Jamestown, S.D.

Sports writer Kevin Schnepf of the *Fargo* (N.D.) *Forum* watched Larsen's team win 22 of its 24 games over the past two seasons plus one team state title and says, "One of his greatest assets

is he's quick on his feet. Moorhead is known for its quick-pitch plays and Larsen, playing guard on offense, had no trouble pulling and getting out ahead of the runner.

"I know he runs the 40 in better than five-flat and that Notre Dame wanted him."

Larsen, who roomed with Lundberg at the Husker football camp last summer, shrugs when he says, "Maybe I should have taken a few recruiting trips or looked at some other schools, but I've always wanted to play at Nebraska."

"Yeah, I still get some letters and a call or two from college recruiters. Most of them stop when I tell them I've made up my mind, but a couple still check in now and then."

"To be a Division I football player in college you've got to make some sacrifices. Even in high school, I've seen some very talented guys not make it and only because they lacked commitment."

At the moment, Lundberg weighs in at 265 pounds on a 6-5 frame. With only 25 boys in high school (Wasau, pop. 647), he not only plays football, basketball and track, he helps Wasau coach Stan Hageman with the afternoon gym classes.

"Of course, we haven't had many major college athletes at Wasau but Lance is the best I've seen in 18 years of coaching," Hageman says. "He was born a Husker. That's where he has always wanted to go."

The mannerly Lundberg answers quickly, "I have no regret whatsoever about my decision to attend Nebraska. I'm happy they thought enough of me as an eight-man player to offer me a scholarship."

Lundberg wasn't an unknown entity. Letters, phone calls and even visits from such schools as UCLA and Georgia, plus official visits to Wyoming and Iowa State, are proof of the extensive recruiting abilities of every university to uncover talent in every state in the nation.

Lundberg and Hageman admitted "it was a special moment" when Coach Osborne visited Wasau. Lundberg has even started his "family ties" as a prospective Husker, as he became friends with Anderson during unofficial visits to Husker games last fall and even spent

some time over the holiday season visiting the Anderson family in Grand Island.

Anderson is a marvelous linebacking talent, who stands 6-2 and weighs 220. He was the second fastest player on his high school team and has a hand-held time of 4.5 in the 40-yard dash.

These kinds of talent didn't go unnoticed as far as Husker coaches were concerned, not to mention scouts from Stanford, Colorado, Wyoming and Iowa. But, Anderson says, "I committed early because I really wanted it that way. It removed a lot of pressure and I always wanted to go to Nebraska."

This last remark is somewhat strange for a young man who is not a native of the state. In fact, he spent most of his time growing up in California, Oregon and Wyoming before his family moved to Grand Island three years ago.

"When I went to Lincoln for my official visit, I was treated like a king," Anderson claims. "I even sat in on a linebacker's meeting. I didn't do or say anything, but it was interesting."

Brad Fuquay of the *Grand Island Independent* says, "A lot of colleges wait and see what Nebraska is going to do. The program at Lincoln is that intimidating."

"But, Mike is a down-to-earth, unassuming young man. When the Nebraska coaches (Osborne and assistant Dan Young) came to visit, that really impressed him."

All three of these young men are acquainted with solid grades and the benefits of a weight program. They all seem eager for the college challenge and appear to have a healthy respect for what awaits them.

At press time the Cornhuskers had added another verbal commitment in linebacker Howard Carter of Dodge City, Kan. *Dodge City Globe* sports editor David McQueen describes the All-State Carter as, "A very quick and strong defensive player, who also has 3.2 grades." Carter, who is 6-5 by 220 and has 4.6 quickness in the 40, led Dodge City to a 10-1 record in 1988 and the semifinals of the Class 6A playoffs. McQueen adds, "Kansas, Iowa State and several other schools recruited Howard, but when Coach Osborne visited him, it wrapped things up. But I think



Nebraska was the front-runner with Howard all along."

Sports Magazines of America conducted a survey to determine a school-boy All-American team (check your last issue of *Huskers Illustrated*). It included 80 athletes, all of whom had rave reviews of their abilities by media representatives and high school recruiting gurus.

As of this writing, 20 or 21 of these high school phenoms have visited or will visit Nebraska before signing date in February.

Most of the media agree with Gillespie that there appears to be an abundance of defensive line prospects. Other than that, it's the usual quality crop with the usual amount of hidden or unknown talents. While Nebraska authorities are forbidden to comment on the prospects until after they've signed, a number of phone calls reveal some stunning talent is considering the Big Red.

Among the SMA All-American defensive linemen who have had the Huskers on their shopping list are Creighton Prep's Junior Bryant; Mike Hinz (6-3, 255), Riverside, Calif.; Shannon Jones (6-4, 220), Houston, Tex.; Alonzo Spellman (6-6, 260), Mt. Holly, N.J.; possibly Mike Lewis (6-5, 275), Brockton, Mass.; and Tamasi Amituanai (6-4, 296), Vista, Calif.

Offensive linemen supposedly accepting invitations from the Huskers include: Morris Unutoa (6-3, 245) of Carson, Calif.; and Todd Yeaman (6-4, 275), Ft. Worth, Tex.

While the Cornhusker cupboard is hardly bare at quarterback, Nebraska is trying to entertain the interest of Curtis Conway (6-1, 175) of Hawthorne, Calif. Conway is regarded as a "world class sprinter" and has received the attention of almost every major college program.

There has been a quartet of fleet running backs showing interest in the Huskers. Michael Bates (5-11, 185),

Tucson, Ariz.; Dewell Brewer (5-9, 190), Lawton, Okla.; Derek Brown (5-10, 185), Anaheim, Calif.; and Ernest Crank (5-11, 180), Bolingbrook, Ill., have been on the Lincoln visitation list along with bull-like fullback Jimmer Bundy (6-0, 240), Woodbury, N.J.

Brown, who told an Oklahoma radio station over the holidays that he had narrowed his choices to Nebraska, OU and USC, rushed for over 2,000 yards last season.

A pair of Texas tight ends are looking toward Lincoln. Pat Bates (6-4, 215) of Galveston, Tex., has already visited and is regarded as the "top high school athlete in the state," according to a Houston newspaper. Steve Seagraves (6-4, 220) of Mesquite, Tex., is the other.

Of the wide receivers expected to visit Nebraska are Mario Henry (6-2, 190) of Medford-Lanape, N.J., and Kevin Williams (5-9, 170) of Dallas, Tex., the latter regarded the "best receiver of a

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great lot in the Dallas area."

Linebacker Jessie Armstead (6-2, 205) of Dallas, Tex., is like Conway — the whole world is trying to get him to visit — and Nebraska is no exception. Who wouldn't, when you consider this young linebacker already runs the 40 in the burning time of 4.45.

Two other linebackers will likely visit Lincoln and they are Arthur Bussie (6-3, 220) of Camden, N.J., and James Mallett (6-3, 210) of Liberty, Tex. The Huskers also hope their reach of attraction will extend to Lauderdale Lakes, Fla., where everybody is trying to recruit Richard McKenzie (6-3, 220).

Of the defensive backs (Nebraska loses three of its starters from the 1988 team), Derric Evans (6-3, 190) of Dallas, Tex., and Robert Gamble (5-10, 185) of Kansas City, Mo., will visit the Lincoln campus, as might Eric Geter (6-0, 195) of Newman, Ga.

One of the most inhibiting rules, at least as far as schools in the Big Eight are concerned, is the one-visit limitation of the head coach. Osborne, one of the most successful and highly regarded coaches in the game, is one of Nebraska's most attractive assets as the early verbal commitments attest.

"There's no way to circumvent the rule. We just have to live with it," Gillespie says. "We usually use Coach at the end, when we're trying to close with the young man, but it varies from kid to kid.

"Regardless, the universities in the metropolitan areas have an extreme advantage. They can get 20 times the unofficial visits with the prospects."

Nine Nebraska assistant coaches have certain areas to cover, although circumstances can dictate temporary changes. Defensive Coordinator Charlie McBride covers St. Louis, Illinois and Chicago, while Pierce has Dallas, East Texas and New Orleans, the latter an area the Huskers have found rewarding since back-to-back wins in the Sugar Bowl.

Ron Brown takes Kansas, rural Missouri, Oklahoma and parts of Arkansas and Northern Louisiana while George Darlington is assigned to California. John Melton has the Upper Midwest, Iowa, Minnesota and Wisconsin, and Tony Samuel recruits the Houston area, including the talent-rich "Golden Tri-

angle" area.

Frank Solich has the East Coast areas, including New Jersey, Massachusetts, Virginia and Florida, and Milt Tenopir covers Colorado, West Texas and Arizona. Dan Young has the state of Nebraska and both Dakotas.

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# The Survivor

DAVE HOPPEN OVERCAME KNEE SURGERY  
TO EARN AN NBA STARTING JOB.

Dave Hoppen felt like pinching himself. Here he was on the floor of the Charlotte Coliseum at the start of the fourth quarter. The Charlotte Hornets and the Philadelphia 76'ers were tied and the sellout crowd (of some 23,000) was on its feet screaming for more: one of the players they screamed for was Hoppen.

"This is the biggest basketball state in the country, and the fans have been great to us all year," Hoppen said.

"They come up to you on the street and talk to you and wish you good luck. Our owner (George Shinn) has gone out of his way to make everything first-class. It makes me happy and proud to be a part of all of this."

Perhaps Hoppen is particularly grateful since his promising basketball career had come precariously close to ending one night in 1986.

A preseason All-American entering his senior year at Nebraska, Hoppen

had been tabbed as potential first-round material by NBA scouts.

He opened the season by looking to secure his place in the NBA lottery. That December he eclipsed the previous Cornhusker scoring record (winding up with 2,167 points, third best in conference history) and became the first Nebraska basketball player to have his jersey number (42) retired.

At the end of the season, the Huskers earned their first trip to the NCAA Tournament — but it was a trip that they made without Hoppen. His college career came to an abrupt halt on Feb. 1 in a game at Colorado where he damaged his anterior cruciate ligament.

The original prognosis was grim. "When I first looked around at the players who had come back from this type of injury, my prospects were dim," explained Hoppen. "But I wasn't ready to give up. I told myself that I would give it my best shot and not let anyone tell me that I couldn't do it; I had to find out on my own."

But it was a long, hard road to travel.

"It was a year and a half before I could really get back on the court and play," Hoppen said. "It was a very, very frustrating time, but I'll tell you one thing — Dr. (Pat) Claire and Dr. (Tom) Heiser (Nebraska team surgeons) did a fantastic job. The knee gives me no problem now. There's no soreness, no swelling, nothing."

Despite his injury, Hoppen's potential worth as an NBA player held steady as far as the Atlanta Hawks were concerned. They selected him in the third round of the 1986 draft with the full understanding that Hoppen was at least two years away from playing status.

Hoppen reported to the Hawks in the fall of 1986, but spent the first half of



**Hoppen remains NU's leading all-time scorer.**



the season rehabilitating, watching from the sidelines. In April of '87, he was able to take the court and get his first taste of NBA practice.

"It wasn't anything real strenuous, and I wasn't ready to go all out, but it was still nice to get out there," he said.

Hoppen's true comeback started in the summer of 1987 when he played in summer leagues (in Los Angeles and Atlanta). The first results were not encouraging.

"I was terrible," Hoppen said. "I was going against guys I knew I was better than, but I couldn't do anything. Everything was out of whack."

But throughout the rough spots, he had plenty of encouragement.

"My wife, Sue, was with me, and she kept saying that I was good enough to be out there, even when I had two points and two rebounds in 25 minutes," Hoppen said.

"The scouts were out there watching as well and they were very positive. The Hawks took me along slowly and never pressured me."

The Hawks' attitude was always supportive; but Hoppen saw a change once he was ready to play.

He was ready to play as the 1987-88 season began, but the Hawks (deep with talent and playoff-bound) were not in a situation to open a spot on the roster for an untested rookie on the comeback trail. Hoppen's inexperience notwithstanding, he was too valuable a commodity for the Hawks to unconditionally release.

"They wanted me to go to Europe for a while. I had been against it, but I knew that I had no shot to play in Atlanta, so we went to Italy."

Hoppen's Italian adventure lasted just over two weeks. "The club had money problems and didn't win a game when I was there. I had a dispute with the manager (they didn't want to pay him his full salary), so we came home."

But, back in the states, Hoppen found himself blocked in his efforts to find a spot in the NBA.

"The Hawks wouldn't release me unconditionally, so I couldn't play anywhere but Europe. My agent contacted the NBA commissioner (David Stern) to petition for my release from Atlanta," Hoppen said.

**Dave Hoppen started in Charlotte's historic first game.**



The Hawks gave him a release and Hoppen's odyssey next took him to Kansas. He spent two weeks playing for the Topeka Sizzlers of the Continental Basketball Association and then, on Jan. 22, 1988, he got the call he'd been waiting for.

The Milwaukee Bucks were on the line, offering him a 10-day contract to play in the NBA. After that, the Golden State Warriors picked him up. It was there that he picked up another spark of encouragement on the road back from injury.

"Don Nelson had taken over the club by then and he had a lot of confidence in me," Hoppen said. "He offered me a two-year contract which gave me some security."

Hoppen averaged 5.9 points and 4.5 rebounds in 39 games (36 with the Warriors). He scored a career-high 17 points against the L.A. Clippers on April 16 and pulled down a career-best 14 rebounds at Phoenix on April 19. In his last nine games, he averaged 10.9 points and 6.3 boards.

With the end of the 1987-88 season, Hoppen knew he might find himself in new surroundings the next season since the NBA was about to add two new teams (Charlotte and Miami). But the thought of expansion was never on Hoppen's mind during his rehab.

"Every player in those summer

leagues, in Europe and the CBA, tells himself that when expansion comes, there'll be a job for him, so you can't really rely on new teams as an easy entry into the league," Hoppen said. "You have to keep on working and not take anything for granted."

Hoppen was the Hornets' fourth pick in the expansion draft and jumped center at the start of their first NBA game. He found himself smack-dab in the middle of America's basketball hotbed — and the object of a few obvious questions.

"A lot of people wonder how a basketball player even came out of a great football school like Nebraska," Hoppen said. "I think people have just begun to realize how good a conference the Big Eight is and that there's talent at every school. I feel like I came in on the ground floor at Nebraska and the program is continuing to develop a little more each year. I want to do everything possible to help Nebraska basketball to develop."

Hoppen credits former Husker assistant coach Tom Baack with helping him develop into an NBA-caliber player. "Coach Baack pulled me aside before my sophomore year and told me that I should work on a jump-hook. When I came out of Benson High School, I had some basic moves, but after playing against guys like Benoit (Benjamin) and



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## The Survivor

Wayman (Tisdale) and Joe Klein, I knew that I needed something extra."

While at Nebraska, Hoppen also heard occasional criticism about his lack of rebounding numbers. He knew he'd have to improve to last in the NBA.

"I think rebounding has been my biggest area of improvement," Hoppen said. "It's funny because last year when I was with Golden State and we played in Phoenix, I gave some tickets to Claude Renfro (former Husker forward from 1981-83). I had 14 rebounds that night and later, at dinner, Claude couldn't get over that. He kept asking 'How did you get all of those?'"

"At Nebraska, my job was primarily to score, so I wasn't asked to rebound as much as I am now. But rebounds are what I'm most proud of," Hoppen added. "Just look around at the guys who stay in the league for a long time because they play good defense and rebound. The fans might not always appreciate those things, but it's obvious that the coaches here do. All you have to do is be aggressive."

So now Hoppen finds himself at the top. He's starting for a team in the NBA and contributing quite well. He still finds himself in awe when he's on the same floor with legends.

"That bothered me quite a bit last year. I would run around for 10 or 12 minutes not knowing where I was. But I had to just decide they were all just basketball players, and I could play with them if I just didn't get excited," Hoppen said.

Hoppen has also found that he has more friends now than he knew he had.

"It's funny how many of these guys who I used to play against in college come up to me before a game to talk. Once the game starts, it's all business. But afterwards, many of them will go to dinner with you. There's a lot more camaraderie than I realized."

It's been a long way from Benson High School to the Boston Garden, but Hoppen hopes he might inspire others to make the same effort.

"I have a great opportunity to show kids that they don't have to go to one of the three or four big schools to make it in the NBA. I hope that will show some others that they can do it as well," he concluded. ■



Paul Hammel

# Bombs Away

RENOWNED FOR RUNNING, NEBRASKA'S BEST TEAMS  
HAVE HAD THE BEST RECEIVERS.

It may have been the most unlikely touchdown reception in the history of Nebraska football. And it was thrown from one receiver to another.

It happened in the 1973 Orange Bowl game with Notre Dame. Johnny Rodgers was completing his illustrious and sometimes stormy career with the Huskers after becoming the first Nebraska player to win the Heisman Trophy.

To showcase his talents, Coach Bob Devaney moved Rodgers from his normal wingback position to I-back. And to further highlight his remarkable athletic talents, Husker coaches worked on a double-pass play during bowl preparations that would put Rodgers on the delivering end of a pass.

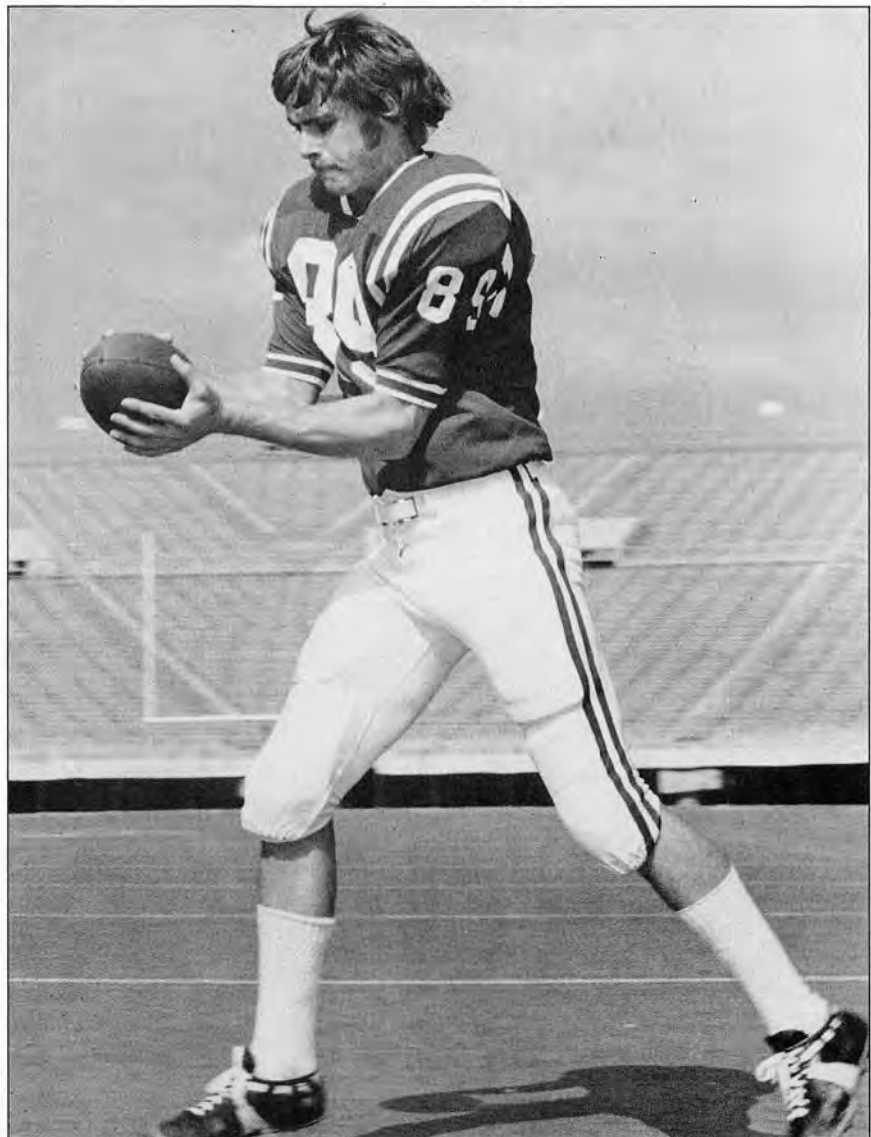
Early in the second quarter with NU already ahead 14-0, the headphone chatter between Offensive Line Coach Carl Selmer on the sidelines and Assistant Head Coach Tom Osborne in the press box concerned the special halfback pass play. A drive stalled, however, before the play could be called.

But, split end Frosty Anderson (who had been relegated to the second unit after the opening-season loss to UCLA) kept asking Selmer about the play.

It had worked to perfection in practice: quarterback David Humm would throw a backward pass to Rodgers on the wing, with Rodgers hitting the split end, who had faked a block on the safety. The split end had been so wide open in practice that Rodgers told Anderson, "You'll get a touchdown on that play."

Fat chance, replied Anderson. Bob Revelle, a transfer from USC, was the starter at split end and thus the likely receiver if the play was ever called.

After a nice Husker punt return, it was called, though NU coaches were unable to tell Humm before he trotted



**Split end Frosty Anderson got away with murder in the 1973 Orange Bowl.**

onto the field. "I'll run it in," offered Anderson. Okay, the coaches said, but just then, a television timeout was called, sending Humm trotting back to the sidelines.

No matter. Anderson "snuck" into the game anyway (much to the consternation of Revelle) and the rest — a 52-yard Humm-to-Rodgers-to-Anderson TD play — was history.

"I got away with murder on that one," said Anderson, now a 37-year-old stock broker in Lincoln, Neb. He and his wife, DeEtte, have two children, Giff and Emily. Anderson stands as NU's No. 16 all-time receiver with 45 receptions for 898 yards, a 20-yard average.

"There wasn't anybody within 15 yards of me," recalled Anderson of the trick play. Of the unlikely reception, he

added, "You've got to make the best of your opportunities."

And that is the rest of the story. . . .

Besides Rodgers and Anderson, Nebraska has had an excellent stable of wide receivers. Check your knowledge with this receiving trivia test:

## QUESTIONS

1. His 14 receptions in a game stands as a Nebraska record.
2. Who was the opponent and what was the year?
3. What is that receiver's hometown?
4. He holds Nebraska's career and season receiving records.
5. How many catches were there?
6. What now-defunct high school did that receiver attend?
7. What was his nickname?

8. This famous Cornhusker receiver's nickname was "The Mosquito."

9. What single-game Nebraska record does he hold?

10. What was the amount of that record and who was the opponent?

11. How many Nebraska receivers have gained more than 1,000 yards in a season on pass receptions?

12. Who is the all-time leader?

13. He holds the NU record for best average-per-reception in a season.

14. What year was that?

15. This receiver holds the career mark.

16. This ex-Nebraska tight end now serves in the state Unicameral.

17. Which professional football teams did he play for?

18. These ends were both named to All-America teams in 1965.

19. To recruit the second player, Bob Devaney used what unusual recruiting ploy?

20. What were those two receivers' best years receiving?

21. Freeman White holds what NU receiving record?

22. Who was the opponent and what year was that record? Who helped White set that record?

23. Frosty Anderson's father coached which college sport at which Big 10 school?

24. This NU tight end listed scuba diving as one of his hobbies.

25. Name the wingback whose brother has become a prolific all-purpose back in the NFL.

26. Name two modern-day Nebraska quarterbacks who were switched to receivers' positions.

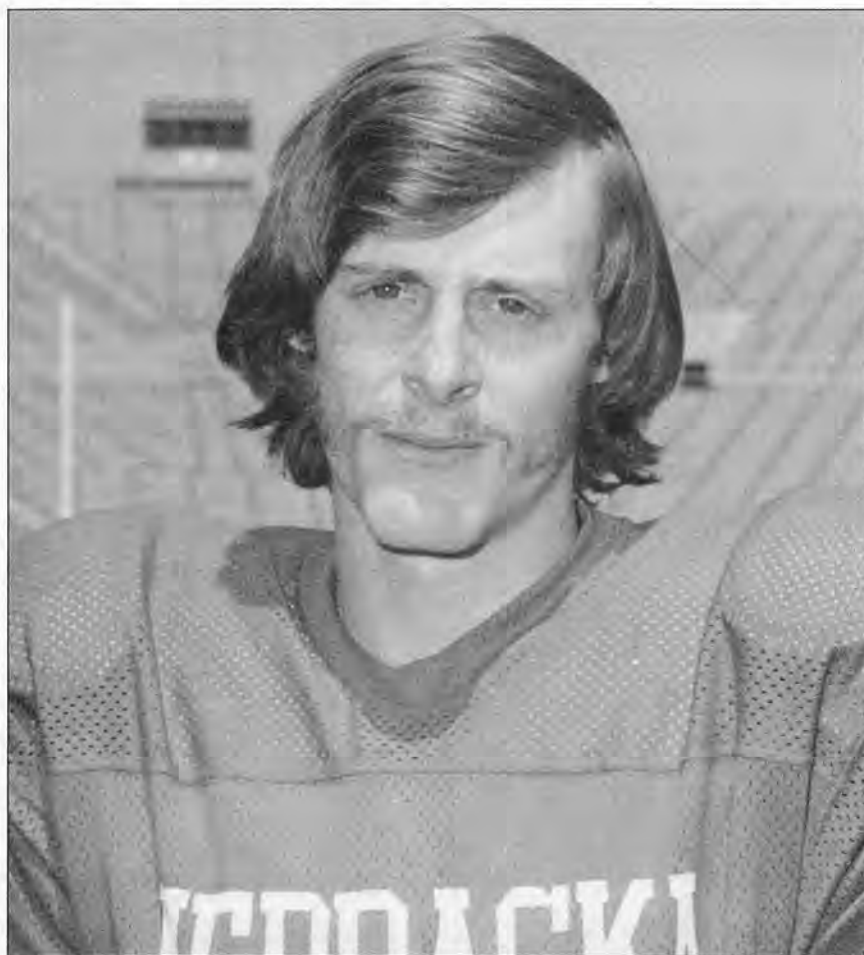
27. Nebraska has had only two receivers lead the Big Eight in receiving. Name them.

28. Ironically, this team has led the Big Eight in passing offense seven times. Identify those years (score yourself an expert if right five or more times).

29. Johnny Rodgers holds all of the school receiving records for wingbacks except one. Name the other record-holder and his record.

30. This former Atlanta Falcon and New Orleans Saint holds most of the NU tight end receiving records.

31. He holds the NU record for most career TDs for split ends.



**Chuck Malito's pass-catching skills bugged NU opponents.**



For DBs trying  
to cover  
Freeman  
White, 1965 was  
a long year.



32. He is the only running back to place among the Huskers' Top 20 career pass receivers.

33. Only two current Huskers began the season among the Top 50 NU career receivers. Name them.

34. Who was the tight end who caught eight passes for 106 yards and a touchdown in the dramatic 21-19 comeback victory over Colorado in 1966?

#### ANSWERS

1. Dennis Richnafsky
2. Kansas State, 1967
3. Clairton, Pa.
4. Johnny Rodgers
5. In a season, 55 receptions (1972); in a career, 143 catches.
6. Omaha Technical High School
7. Johnny the Jet
8. Chuck Malito

9. Most receiving yards in a game
10. 166 yards vs. Hawaii in 1976
11. None
12. Rodgers, with 942 yards in 1972
13. Frosty Anderson, with a 24.15 per-catch average
14. 1972
15. Rob Schnitzler, 21.6 yards (1984-86)
16. Jim McFarland
17. St. Louis and Miami
18. Freeman White and Tony Jeter
19. He sang with Jeter's mother in the family living room. His mother was an organist. Among the selections was "Bringing in the Sheaves."
20. White, 28 in 1965; Jeter, 18 catches in 1964
21. Longest pass reception for a touchdown — 95 yards
22. Colorado, 1965, from Fred Duda

23. Basketball, at Michigan State
24. Larry Mushinskie
25. Curtis Craig
26. Frank Patrick, tight end; Earl Everett, wingback
27. Johnny Rodgers and Tim Smith. Rodgers in 1971 (4.4 catches per game) and Smith in 1979 (2.7)
28. 1948, 1964, 1967, 1971, 1972, 1974 and 1976
29. Irving Fryar, yards receiving in a single game: 138 vs. Minnesota in 1983
30. Junior Miller
31. Bobby Thomas, 14, 1974-76
32. I-back Tony Davis, who caught 53 passes for 499 yards during his career that ended in 1975.
33. Dana Brinson, No. 39 with 28 receptions, and Todd Millikan, No. 46 with 24 catches
34. Dennis Morrison ■

# Votes of Confidence

USUALLY LOW-KEY, NU FACES A PUBLICITY CROSSROADS FOR ITS ALL-STARS IN 1989.

It shouldn't have come as a surprise when Oklahoma State's Barry Sanders won the Heisman Trophy.

The junior tailback's statistics were so dramatic he didn't need a lot of hype from the Cowboy Sports Information Office or preseason publicity.

Oklahoma State didn't mail out Barry Sanders T-shirts or four-color, life-size posters.

Sanders, who once said he didn't even want it, won the Heisman on the field.

Sure, he had detractors. One voter indicated Sanders wouldn't be included on his ballot because Sanders played in a "rinky-dink conference."

But such attitudes were rare (illustrated by Sanders earning twice as many votes as his nearest competitor, Southern California quarterback Rodney Peete). It would have been a miscarriage of justice if Sanders hadn't won.

The problem is, not every post-season award is made on such a clearcut basis. Sometimes, the statistical difference between players is slight. Sometimes, there are no reliable statistics: two of the three finalists for the Outland Trophy were offensive linemen, Michigan State's Tony Mandarich and Pittsburgh's Mark Stepnoski.

The third (winner Tracy Rocker of Auburn) was a defensive tackle. Though they may not have been as convincing as those of Sanders, Rocker's statistics at least supported his candidacy — 101 tackles, including 13 for losses, and five quarterback sacks.

To complement those numbers, Auburn's sports information office mailed videotaped highlights of Rocker to Outland and Lombardi Award voters.

The videotape included a brief interview with Rocker and portrayed him as a student-athlete. In addition, Auburn mailed out a letter, signed by Coach Pat



**NU may rethink its publicity plan for Jake Young (68) in '89 because of the expected TV drought.**

Dye, encouraging voters to call if they had further questions.

Michigan State and Pittsburgh produced similar videotaped mailings for Mandarich and Stepnoski.

Are such mailings useful in supporting players for post-season awards?

Nebraska's sports information office had a special mailing in support of senior outside linebacker Broderick Thomas this season. Thomas was a candidate for the Butkus and Lombardi Awards. He was the runner-up to Alabama's Derrick Thomas in the former and

one of five finalists (the order isn't announced) in the latter.

The special mailing was a first for Nebraska, according to Associate Sports Information Director Tom Simons.

"Whether it helped or not, I don't know," said Simons.

The Nebraska Sports Information Office has always taken the attitude that "basically, the player's got to win an award on the field," Simons said.

The Cornhuskers have done quite well with that philosophy.

Check Nebraska's trophy case: two Heismans, five Outlands and three Lombardis, as well as countless All-America and All-Big Eight selections.

Cornhusker players generally receive sufficient national attention.

"At a school like Nebraska, he's going to get the exposure," said Simons. "If he has a great year, people are going to know about it."

"We send out regular mailings and we work with TV, radio and newspapers. But we never have an all-out campaign."

That was a common attitude among the sports information directors for perennially successful programs like Nebraska's. "The old school of thought was, it's not the thing to do; it's insulting to the voter," explained Simons.

But attitudes are changing.

"Next year, we may have to rethink what we're doing," he said.

The national television exposure to which the Cornhuskers have become accustomed could be all but eliminated because of an unattractive non-conference schedule and NCAA probation for Big Eight rivals Oklahoma and Oklahoma State. "We're probably not going to have anywhere near the TV exposure we've had," said Simons.

"We may not even have an appearance on national television."



As a result, Nebraska might consider some kind of regular mailing in support of a Cornhusker candidate for post-season honors, like Jake Young.

The offensive center from Midland, Tex., earned All-America recognition this season, a solid base from which to work for his senior year.

But Nebraska's sports information office may have to supplement what voters already know about Young with a mailer or even a videotape.

"I don't think four-color posters are going to win anybody anything," Simons said. However, a short, focused release, "comparing him to other great (Nebraska) players (at his position) in the past might help."

The Cornhuskers have established a tradition of outstanding offensive linemen, including center Dave Rimington, who won two Outland Trophies and a Lombardi Award, and guard Dean Steinkuhler, who won both the Outland Trophy and Lombardi Award in 1983.

Just associating Young with such outstanding linemen can help.

Voters need to be reminded.

Simons wouldn't advocate mailing out T-shirts with Young's picture on them, like Richmond did when the Spiders' Barry Redden was a Heisman candidate. But Simons doesn't criticize Richmond for doing what it did for Redden.

"That might not have been a bad idea for them," Simons said.

Richmond and its players lack the instant national recognition that Nebraska football has.

However, "we might consider something like that here for a basketball player," said Simons.

The Cornhuskers did, in fact, distribute a special poster featuring Dave Hoppen his senior year, of a larger-than-life Hoppen straddling the court at the Devaney Sports Center.

Lee Barfknecht, a sports writer for the *Omaha World Herald* who has covered Cornhusker and Big Eight football for five years, talked recently about the process of voting for post-season awards, such as the Heisman and all-conference teams.

His views seem to be representative of those who vote responsibly.

**Huskers Illustrated: What do you think about sports information offices**

**Consensus All-American Broderick Thomas was close - but not close enough - in the Butkus and Lombardi races.**



**that produce special mailers in support of candidates for post-season honors?**

Barfknecht: I wouldn't care for something glossy or glitzy at all. I might even, in a way, hold that against a guy. But an informational tape or a postcard with weekly updates of a player, I like that. I like to know week-by-week what a guy's doing; I don't have a problem with that."

(UCLA's sports information office sent out a weekly postcard in support of quarterback Troy Aikman. The card included a picture of Aikman and his statistics, both cumulative and from the previous Saturday's game.)

**HI: Do you think other voters share your attitude about such things?**

Barfknecht: You've got to try to plant the seed with some people, I think. I ask guys about things like that, and I don't see any great objections. They don't want to be bombarded with paper hats that say, 'Vote for Broderick.' But I think most people like to be informed — a

weekly stat sheet or a weekly postcard. One year Air Force sent out postcards for Chad Henning, and I thought that was nice. It told me how many sacks and how many tackles he had. That's what I wanted to know; that's what I needed to know."

**HI: Do you think sports information departments are changing their attitude about such mailings?**

Barfknecht: Yes, I do. I got a clock from Oregon for (quarterback) Chris Miller one year and pens for Temple's Paul Palmer. Those things have no effect, whatsoever. But I think the whole marketing and promotion aspect is catching on. Sports information offices are learning how to touch people and make them react a little bit.

**HI: Richmond University sent out T-shirts in support of Barry Redden in a Heisman Trophy campaign. Couldn't something like that benefit a player in a program that doesn't have the reputation of a Nebraska?**

Barfknecht: I think the player needs



to have some great games early in the season to get himself going. But something like the T-shirt, early, might help because when he has a good game, people will say, 'I've heard of that guy.' They might start tracking the player on their own.

**HI: How do you approach the voting for the Heisman Trophy? (Voters are asked to pick three players, in the order of their preference.)**

Barfknecht: The first two spots on the Heisman ballot I vote for the guys I think are the best players. My third vote is usually for someone obscure — I guess that's the word — somebody I think should get some mention. Or I vote for someone in such a way that I'm not undercutting my top two votes.

For example, this year my first two votes were for Barry Sanders and Steve Walsh and my third vote was for Tony Mandarich, a deserving player but one

who didn't have much chance of winning the Heisman because he's a lineman. I didn't vote for Rodney Peete third because if I had, that would have made my vote for Sanders less meaningful.

**HI: Do you talk to a lot of people before sending in a ballot?**

Barfknecht: I try to call at least a couple of guys I know in the East and far West to see what people in those areas are thinking. You can't paint with a broad brush and say everybody's a 'homer' or everybody just votes in their region. I think guys do a pretty good job, basically. Most voters try to be pretty conscientious.

But when you have so many people, there's going to be regionalism. If the Downtown Athletic Club wants to include past Heisman winners as voters, I think that's great. But having 800 or 900 people vote can be unwieldy.

**HI: Do you think there's a lot of communication between voters in various regions of the country?**

Barfknecht: Not really. I'd be in favor of more of that. Obviously, when guys see each other at games, they talk about things like that a little bit. I don't do enough of it myself.

I like to get on the phone and talk to guys in other areas, see what they're writing about, if there are trends in other areas, what the coaches they cover are talking about.

I think it would be helpful if there were more of that.

**HI: Do most voters take their responsibility seriously?**

Barfknecht: I would hope so. I'm not sure if 'significant' is the right word but there's a decent number of unqualified voters — people who aren't paying very close attention. They might hear somebody's name early in the year; it sticks in their mind, and they may not follow the player at all.

Post-season awards are certainly important to the players involved.

The attitude expressed in a recent television special by Ed Marinaro, the actor who was a Heisman candidate as a running back at Cornell, is hardly typical. Marinaro said the Heisman didn't mean anything.

Oklahoma State's Sanders may not have coveted the trophy but he never said it was meaningless.

And after the Outland Trophy was awarded to Tracy Rocker, runner-up Tony Mandarich criticized the NCAA for costing him the trophy.

Mandarich, who finished sixth in the Heisman Trophy voting, was suspended by the NCAA for applying for the NFL's supplementary draft before his senior season and missed three games.

"I paid for it," Mandarich told the Gannett News Service. "Not just by three games but by the Outland Trophy. I've still got the knife in my back."

"The three-game suspension is what lost it. The Outland is something I worked for all my life."

"I'm ticked off. I'm bitter. I'm stressed out and I'm burned out."

Such awards can be important. And anyone who agrees to vote accepts a significant responsibility. ■



**Barry Sanders won the Heisman with scant TV time last year. Next year, he'll have zilch.**





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